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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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NO. 142

Coming—A Fine Story
By ARTHUR B. REEVE
AND
MARGARET WILSON REEVE

—Feature—
Detective Story

BLOOD RUBIES

—by—

J. WERNER PHELPS.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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OUR NEXT ISSUE

WE have a wonderful surprise for you. The next number of this magazine will contain a feature story, written for us by the greatest authors of detective fiction in the world —

ARTHUR B. REEVE and MARGARET WILSON REEVE

This novelette is entitled

"I'LL WIN! I'LL WIN!"

You all know what remarkable stories they have written for the greatest magazines and newspapers. Well, this story is one of their very best. We hope you will read and enjoy it. Every line is full of human interest, and the plot will hold you spellbound.

In the same issue we shall begin featuring a new series of short stories replete with lively detective adventures, entitled:

"GUTTERSIDE TALES"

By NEIL McCONLOGUE

They are snappy stories, written in a masterly manner by a brilliant author, and will surely please our readers.

Next, there will be a rousing detective story by that prince of good fiction, HAMILTON CRAIGIE. His latest is called

"POINT BLANK"

Do not miss reading this intensely interesting narrative.

We also wish to announce that we will have a special article by the well-known fingerprint expert,

BENJAMIN CALL

Then there will be some fine detective stories by J. ELBERT JONES, detective, connected with the force in one of our large cities; MERRITT L. ALLEN, whose stories you have read in this magazine, and G. P. WILSON, an experte author of detective fiction.

JOE BURKE'S dramatic serial, "JUST WITHIN THE LAW," will end in the next number, and we will announce another fine serial by a celebrated author. The short articles will be of unusual interest, and cover a wide range of old subjects.

WATCH FOR THE COMING NUMBERS OF THIS MAGAZINE

We will soon issue some remarkably fine features written by the late GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD and FRANK BLIGHTON, a great favorite in all the leading magazines. We also have stories from BEULAH POYNTER, authoress of the well-known play, "THE UNBORN"; JACK BECHDOLT, whose work you all like, and a number of other equally as popular writers.

It must surprise you to see the work of such famous authors in a TEN-CENT magazine, but it is our policy to give you the very best that money can buy, and we are doing it.

THE EDITOR.

BLOOD RUBIES

By J. Werner Phelps

CHAPTER ONE

DETECTIVE BARNABY dropped his cigarette into the rather battered brass tray and leaned forward with sudden interest.

"Wait a moment, Pearson," he interrupted; "I want to get the whole thing straight. Start again at the beginning, please, and don't leave out anything—even your impressions."

Pearson Gaylord, Jr., settled back from the edge of his chair, and his rather boyish face took on an expression of relief.

"I'm glad you're interested, for now I know you'll take the case. Well, it started at my bachelor dinner, night before last, in a private dining-room at the Perrimount. As you know, Margaret Harcourt and I are to be married on the fifteenth, and the boys were celebrating. We had a gay time—oh, the usual stuff: jokes, stories of certain past affairs."

"How many were there?" Barnaby asked.

"There were thirteen of us. We even drank a toast to the jinx of bad luck. We had sent the waiters away, and I stood to respond to the toast they had just drank to my future with Margaret.

"You ask for impressions. Well, as I looked along that table, strewn with empty glasses, the ends and ashes of many cigars, curling rose petals falling from the wilting bouquets, I had, I think, the first serious thoughts of my life. As you know, since Dad can count his fortune in millions, I have not even had to think for myself. I admit I am spoiled, pampered. It came to me then that even my wife was picked out for me—proposed to for me, for all I can remember, and she is as spoiled and pampered as myself.

"Well, I shook off these fool thoughts; they were not at all in keeping with the spirit of the occasion. I raised my glass, starting a gay answer to the banter, but I never finished that speech.

"A door at the rear of the room suddenly opened, then closed with a sharp click. I started and the others turned.

"Standing with her back against the door, one bare arm extended across its white-and-gold decorations, stood the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She wore an evening gown, shimmering white, clinging. Cloudy dark hair fell about her bare shoulders and framed a face that was chalk white. The lips were spread apart in fear and the big dark eyes full of an awful horror.

"'I have killed him!' she said mechanically and swayed as if about to crumple to the

floor. But she suddenly drew herself together and took a step nearer the table.

"'Help me—save me!' she implored, her eyes roaming from one to the other of us, but finally resting on me. Honestly, Barnaby, I got a shock. She was so beautiful, so absolutely frightened, so appealing. Not one of us could speak.

"'Oh, you can't know—you can't know!' she went on tragically. 'I have lived in hell, cruelty, torture of spirit, physical violence; to-night—see,' and she pointed to her throat and arms, and on them were brutal finger-marks already turning dark.

"I heard several gasps from the others, but I found my glance again on her face. Her eyes, wide with horror and from which great tears were welling, held us all—actually drew us from our places toward her.

"'What can we do?' I found myself saying.

"She answered quickly: 'I swear I was forced to it by cruelty. Get me out of here. *Please!*"

"That word sounds foolish repeated here in your library, Barnaby, but as she said it, with eyes, lips and arms adding their plea, there was a world of suffering and compelling power to its very inflections.

"All of our sympathy went out to her. It was impossible to believe her guilty of a crime. Her killing seemed perfectly justified. We must save this beautiful creature from those who might judge her more harshly.

"I turned and saw that every man at the table felt as I did. Of course you'll think we were mushy with drink."

"And you got her out?" asked the detective.

"Yes, it was easy enough. She was in evening dress, so were we. A glance at my watch showed me my car was waiting, as we were all to take in a show. I got my hat and coat and another chap slipped his coat on her; it was one of those loose light coats, and did not look strange. She pinned up her hair, and after a struggle got control of herself, so that when we walked from the room and down the two flights of stairs we looked like any ordinary couple.

"Well, I saw her safely into the car.

"'Where to?' I asked her.

"'I haven't any place I dare go,' she replied and sank back looking so ill that I told Bobs, the chauffeur, to take her to my apartment and come back for me.

"'I'll be there in half an hour. We'll plan something to help you,' I assured her.

"Then I went back, to find our jollification at an end. Away from the influence of her appealing personality, we all felt suddenly foolish. The boys pointed to the door, and on it were five crimson blots, where her fingers had rested."

"And the lady?" Barnaby smiled and took up another cigarette.

"Now I'm coming to the strange part," Gaylord went on. "We broke up right away. I found my chauffeur, Bobs, rather scared.

"'Mr. Gaylord,' he said, 'I can't understand it, but when we reached the house, sir, and I opened the door, the auto was empty and the lady was gone!'"

CHAPTER TWO

"THE chauffeur had stopped somewhere?" Detective Barnaby demanded interestedly.

"He swore he didn't. Says he went directly home; didn't stop once. But I put the girl in the car, closed the door and watched them off."

"Of course he must have slowed down at a crossing," Barnaby mused. "However, about the murder?"

"There was no murder at the Perrimount that night, unless, of course, it was hushed up. But I haven't told you quite all. When I reached my apartment I found it in darkness. As I felt for the electric button I was grabbed, bound and gagged, and I was most carefully searched, even to my shoes."

"The devil!" exclaimed the officer, leaning forward again, all interest.

"There were at least two men on the job. I was left helpless until I managed to kick myself free and ring for Jerry, my valet. My apartment had been as thoroughly

searched as myself, and they had left it a wreck."

Barnaby whistled softly.

"Anything taken?" he asked.

"Not a thing. But since then—and this is why I want you to take the case—I find I am being most carefully followed, and it is getting rather annoying."

"Followed!" repeated the detective. "That means some one believes you have something; that the woman turned over something. Is your car downstairs—the one you had night before last?"

"Yes."

Barnaby secured his hat and coat and hurried out of the room, Gaylord after him.

"Tell Bobs to drive out of the city," the officer said crisply as they entered the enclosed car.

Barnaby sat smoking thoughtfully, but his eyes, narrowed to two slits, were covering every inch of the interior of the car.

Nothing more was said until they slipped out Riverside Drive, then Gaylord, who had been peering through the back window, exclaimed aloud:

"That's the same car, the small black car, that followed me all day yesterday."

"I was in hopes they'd follow," said Barnaby. "Don't let them see we are wise, but keep one eye on them and let me know if they come closer."

To Gaylord's surprise, the sleuth began a systematic search of the inside of the car. His long white fingers slipped into folds of the gray covering and into all openings and cracks.

"What's the idea?" Gaylord queried.

Barnaby laughed.

"Your mysterious woman got away with something. That something's drawing these folks. They didn't find it on you or in your apartment, and I want to beat them to finding it here."

Gaylord turned to the window.

"They're gaining on us," he cried.

"Tell Bobs to step on it," snapped Barnaby, and a moment later the car shot ahead.

They were soon on the open road where houses were far apart. Barnaby's fingers went on with their searching, pressing here, delving there.

A horn sounded directly in back. On sped their own car, the other almost touching it. Slowly the other car gained, passed Gaylord's, then slowed a little.

"My God, they're crowding us off the road!" breathed Gaylord.

There was a sudden jolt as Bobs, to avoid a collision, turned the car sharply. The big car seemed to hesitate; the front right wheel left the road, the other followed. For one moment it seemed about to turn turtle; then, wobbling crazily, it plunged down the embankment.

CHAPTER THREE

A MOMENT later the car came to a jarring stop, the front wheels in a shallow ditch.

Gaylord, with a curse, threw the door open.

"What the devil did you do that for?" he yelled.

But he found himself gazing into the mouth of an ugly-looking revolver.

"Get out!" commanded a voice, and Gaylord, inwardly boiling with impotent anger, stepped onto the ground where Bobs already stood.

"You, too, and quick!" called out the voice again, and Barnaby, holding a bloody handkerchief to his nose, descended and stood beside Gaylord and Bobs.

"Hands up!" snarled the voice, and all obeyed. The detective put his hands up, but, as every one could plainly see, his nose was bleeding profusely; he drew down his left hand and again held the handkerchief to his nose. The big man started to protest, evidently thought better of it, and snapped an order to his confederate.

"Search 'em, Pete," he commanded.

While the younger man approached and deftly ran his fingers into pockets and over their bodies, Barnaby's eyes took in every detail of the two men. The one who had spoken, and who seemed to be the leader, was a big, middle-aged man; the other was younger, tall, slender, well-dressed. They

both wore handkerchiefs over the lower half of their faces.

"Nothing here!" snapped the younger one, stepping back.

"Search the car—and *search* it well," ordered the big fellow.

And then there came a sound of ripping and cutting that augured ill for the upholstery.

The whole thing was over in a very few minutes. The two men clambered up the embankment to their own car, turned it, and went back toward the city.

"Did they find anything, I wonder?" remarked Gaylord, ruefully looking at his car.

"No," answered Barnaby. "Some searchers, but stupid amateurs; a business man makes a poor highwayman, anyway."

Gaylord, who was examining the ruined interior of his car, turned. "Slashed every bit of it; probably something small they were looking for."

"Let's get back to town," suggested the officer.

With a good deal of difficulty they got the car back onto the road and faced toward the city.

"You did get a bump," Gaylord sympathized.

"Yes, and I got something else," and Barnaby shook something from the blood-stained handkerchief and held out his hand.

Gaylord gasped and leaned forward.

"Phew!" he whistled, for in Barnaby's palm were five big blood-red rubies!

"Worth a small fortune," said Barnaby. "If I hadn't been leaning forward and got that fierce bump I couldn't have concealed them. Our friends saw that the blood was genuine and never thought of looking in my handkerchief."

"But where did you get them?"

"When you told me about the disappearance of the girl from the car, and your being searched, I could see at once that there was something that girl got away with, something these folks were after, and as they were still following you the chances were it was missing yet. The most logical place of concealment was the car."

"By Jove! I should have thought of that. Where were they?"

"I happened to be leaning forward when the bump came, in a last desperate search. I was thrown, the rug rail caught my nose square, and for a moment I saw stars. Then I felt the blood and got my handkerchief out. At that moment you opened the door and I glanced down. One of these was on the floor. The jar had loosened it, and in two seconds I had the others. See, they were tucked there, in the corner, where the covering laps. The place has been cut by those men, so they would have been found if I had not got them first."

"But whose are they?"

"Now, see here," said Barnaby, "I'm under the impression that there is something pretty serious back of all this. If there was no murder, then that woman acted a clever part to get away with these stones."

"She wasn't acting," averred Gaylord. "She was half frightened to death."

"Well, she had the stones, anyway, that's sure. She hid them here. I'd suggest my taking care of them for a few days. If you have them these desperadoes may get the rubies."

"Why surely," agreed Gaylord. "You keep the pesky things. They look unlucky to me—like five drops of blood—like the fingermarks on the hotel door where the girl's bloody hand rested. I want you to find her and those damn rascals also."

Barnaby turned and looked at Gaylord.

"Say, Pearson," he laughed, "this excitement is doing you good; you're twice the man you were—developing into a reg'lar fighter."

Gaylord joined in the laugh.

"And don't worry about the girl," went on the detective as the car stopped in front of his apartment house. "She hasn't forgotten where she left those gems. When she thinks the coast is clear she'll come for them."

Gaylord went at once to his apartment, hoping to find some message from the mysterious girl. Jerry, the valet, informed him that Margaret Harcourt had called up several times and left an urgent message for him to come to her at once. He went.

As he entered the Harcourt mansion he had a sudden sensation of coming disaster,

and this was confirmed when Margaret joined him.

"I'm sorry, Pearson," she said at once, "but I must call off our marriage."

"Nonsense," laughed Gaylord. "You are fooling. You can't—a week before the ceremony."

Margaret's delicate face paled and her big blue eyes filled. "I can't explain; people will have to think I'm another fickle society girl." But she drew in her breath, as if in pain.

Gaylord was about to answer when a loud exclamation from the library beyond drew them both to the doorway.

James Harcourt, the girl's uncle, stood in front of his open safe, an expression of horror on his face.

"Oh, what is it, Uncle James?" Margaret cried, running to him.

"I have been robbed—money, bonds, but, most of all, jewels that I took in security for a big loan."

"Jewels?" exclaimed Margaret.

"Yes—five valuable oriental blood rubies."

CHAPTER FOUR

"FIVE blood rubies," echoed Gaylord. He thought of those five blood-red stones as they lay in Barnaby's hand. Could they be the same? But the tragic face of the girl of the hotel seemed to rise before him, frightened, appealing. No, these rubies were *her* secret.

Harcourt roused himself.

"I must get them back," he muttered.

"There is no better detective than Barnaby, Mr. Harcourt. You know he has done some wonderful work lately. He'll trace them," Gaylord assured him.

"Do get him, uncle," pleaded Margaret.

Harcourt seemed to hesitate.

"I'll speak to him, then," he announced suddenly, turning to the phone.

Gaylord, his mind on the strange coincidence of the two lots of rubies, rather absent-mindedly said "good-by" and left the room.

At the front door—he had never waited for servants in this house—he suddenly recalled Margaret's changing her mind about their engagement and, realizing that he had left that matter rather unsettled, he retraced his steps across the hall. But in the drawing-room he paused as raised voices came to him from the library.

"In God's name, why did you break off with him?" Harcourt's voice, angry, snarling, came to him.

"Because I couldn't marry him knowing what I now know." Margaret's voice broke in a sob.

"You're a fool," Harcourt snapped. "He'd never find out anything. You'd be married, and he'd be very careful of his precious name. If he did break he'd settle for——"

Then came Margaret's voice, angry, passionate:

"Don't you dare ever hint such a thing. I'm not as low as that."

Gaylord did not wait to hear more. His smoothly running world seemed topsy-turvy. Every one was upset, troubled; that surely was not like Margaret; he had never seen her otherwise than gentle. Before him floated two women's faces. He went at once to Detective Barnaby's apartment.

"Yes, Harcourt just engaged me," Barnaby told him, and Gaylord explained all he had overheard.

"The case is doubly yours, Barnaby. If these are the same gems, the solution is somewhere between the girl with the tragic eyes and gentle Margaret Harcourt. Solve it, old man."

And the detective agreed to handle the case. If the rubies were the same ones Harcourt lost he would find out how they got from Harcourt's safe into the hands of the beautiful woman of the hotel.

Already he had made cautious inquiries and brought out the fact that there had been an alarm on the third floor of the hotel the night of the dinner party; that a man had been injured, but not seriously. The man registered as George Burdeck and checked out the next day.

He had a woman caller on that night, a very beautiful woman. She was not seen leaving the hotel. There had also been a middle-aged, well-dressed man, then later two younger men callers.

Barnaby on his way to Harcourt's had a hunch that these two affairs were connected, and this hunch was confirmed when he found that Harcourt fitted fairly well the description of Burdeck's caller and, by stretching his imagination a bit, might easily be the big man of the holdup. If this were true the officer had to give credit to Harcourt for great self-possession, for not by a quiver did he show that he had ever seen Barnaby before.

The detective reached Margaret's home and had a talk with her uncle.

Harcourt waved his hand.

"There's the safe. Go and find the thief," he said in surly tones.

Barnaby found that a window in the library had been tampered with from the outside, and there were unmistakable scratches on the safe, but the safe had not been forced open; of that the detective made sure. Some one evidently tried to force it, but, failing, had worked out the combination.

His question of Harcourt and Margaret convinced him that the girl was about ill from some mental excitement and that the old man was not altogether frank. He summarily dismissed any suspicion that Margaret was guilty of touching the safe.

"Mr. Harcourt," he said suddenly, "if I'm to help you, you must tell me everything about this affair."

Harcourt started and turned angrily on the detective.

"Tell you everything?" he snapped. "You know as much as I do. I tell you I put those gems in the safe five days ago. I had no occasion to open it till to-day."

"And what was your reason to-day?" Barnaby asked quietly.

Harcourt's face turned livid.

"That," he cried, "is none of your business. I hired you to find those stones, not to waste your time asking silly questions."

The detective got up at once and proceeded with a further examination of the room. If it had not been for the other side of this mystery he would have walked out of the house. Harcourt sullenly watched him until he was called from the room by a servant. He had scarcely left before Margaret came over to the detective.

"Mr. Barnaby," she pleaded, "do your best to find the gems, won't you?"

"I certainly will," he heartily assured her.

Margaret hesitated, as if about to say much more, then laid her hand on his arm.

"Find them at any cost—*no matter who seems to be the thief,*" she said with peculiar emphasis and left the room.

CHAPTER FIVE

BARNABY was puzzled over that remark; it rankled in his mind. If Margaret Harcourt could be forced to tell all she knew he felt it might shed some light on the other end of the mystery.

He determined to question her again.

Meantime with his magnifying-glass he examined the safe more thoroughly. There were numerous fingermarks on it, but all of them seemed to be alike. Undoubtedly Harcourt's, he reflected. There were also a few smudges that might have been caused by gloved fingers.

Barnaby did not stay here long. There were certain things he wanted to find out, and within a few hours he had the information that Harcourt had been losing rather heavily on certain Wall Street transactions, also that he had insured five rubies to the very limit of their value.

Back in his own library the detective mustered all details before him. He had not been able to get much of a description of the man called Burdeck. That he was tall, slender and dark might have fitted thousands of men. The younger of the two highwaymen was tall, slender and dark; the other big, middle-aged or old. For the sake of a working hypothesis the officer laid out the story in his mind, putting in all the facts and filling the gaps with possibilities.

Burdeck and Harcourt, working together, could fake a burglary, he figured, after putting the insurance on the gems. Burdeck

may have taken the jewels, expecting to dispose of them. Then at the hotel one of his women accomplices, thinking he was holding back on this job, might have quarreled with Burdeck and stabbed him. Becoming frightened, and believing herself pursued, she had dashed into the private dining-room where the susceptible young men helped her to escape.

This was all theoretical, of course.

Well, so far so good, but he must prove his hypothesis before turning over the gems. Suppose, just for sake of argument, there were two sets of rubies? He must make sure the ones he held were the rubies taken from Harcourt's safe, and to find that out Harcourt must give him more information.

The next morning he called at the Harcourt home and found Margaret and her uncle in the library.

"Well?" demanded Harcourt gruffly as he was shown in.

Barnaby exchanged greetings with Margaret, then seated himself before replying.

"I'm working hard, but need your help a bit," he began.

"All right, fire away!" Harcourt was evidently in better humor than the preceding day.

"Now, sir, I must ask where you got those gems."

"Why, I told you about that. A certain customer of mine, one interested in some enterprises, needed cash—ten thousand, to be exact—and persuaded me to lend it when he put up the rubies as collateral."

"Are you in the habit of taking gems as collateral?"

"Why, no, but this was an exceptional case. He's a young man who seemed to have a good scheme."

"Oh, a young man," repeated Barnaby. "And a scheme, you say. Do you mind telling me what the scheme was?"

"Yes, I do mind. How can that help to trace the stones? You are to find out what happened after they were in my safe—not before."

Barnaby smoked on in silence for a moment, but his eyes were watching Harcourt closely.

"Well," he said quietly, "I feel that your answers may have a lot to do with the case. I believe in being frank, Mr. Harcourt. I know you have lost considerable money lately."

The old man was on his feet in a flash.

"Margaret," he snapped, "I will ask you to leave the room."

Margaret did not move.

"I'm sorry, Uncle James," she said, "but I feel I have the right to stay here, as the money you handle is mine."

The detective puffed on in silence, hoping they would say more about their personal affairs, but Harcourt suddenly subsided.

"Well, then, I have lost a good deal of money lately." He turned to Barnaby defiantly. "What else did you find out?"

"That you placed a heavy insurance on the gems."

Harcourt exploded again.

"And you think I robbed the safe, do you, to collect the insurance? Well, I didn't."

Barnaby wondered if the explosion was a covering for his chagrin at finding that the facts of his losses and the insurance were known.

At an exclamation Barnaby turned to Margaret. She sat as if turned to stone, her eyes big with horror.

"Oh, I can't believe *that,*" she murmured. "I can't think of my uncle being a thief."

"A man losing money might be tempted," the detective said quietly.

But if he expected Harcourt's reaction to that would give away anything he was mistaken, for the man stood glaring down at him in silence. That Harcourt was deep Barnaby was sure, and also that he was capable of covering that depth by a volcanic vehemence. He had shown it.

"A little incident happened the other night," the detective went on smoothly. "Perhaps it has no connection with this case. By the way, do you know a 'George Burdeck'?"

"Never heard of him," asserted Harcourt.

"Well, there was a little stabbing affair at a certain hotel—a woman escaped, got in a stranger's car, fled from that, but later

five oriental rubies were found hidden in the car."

"Five rubies!" Margaret exclaimed. "Oh, if they are the same ones!"

"Would *you* know them?" snapped the detective, turning quickly, and Margaret answered on the instant:

"Yes." Then her face crimsoned. "That is—Uncle James had shown them to me."

But Barnaby had already written on his mental blackboard, "Margaret Harcourt knows all about the rubies," and yet he remembered that Gaylord had told him Margaret was astonished that Harcourt had any gems.

Harcourt was looking at him coldly.

"That remark was a detective's little trick, I suppose, Mr. Barnaby—to surprise some information."

"No," the officer assured him. "Such an incident did occur Tuesday night."

"But the woman—who was she?" Margaret leaned forward suddenly.

Barnaby's brain worked on a scheme quickly.

"She was young, very beautiful—dark, with big dark eyes."

But, to the officer's astonishment, Margaret Harcourt slipped from her chair in a dead faint.

CHAPTER SIX

DETECTIVE BARNABY had a lot to think about during the next few hours. That Harcourt and Margaret were concealing things that, if known, would clear up the mystery he felt certain. He had purposely left the old man before Margaret fully recovered; for, wise in the ways of women, he was sure Margaret would want to know more about "the very young, very beautiful, dark girl."

After dinner a lady was announced. As he had expected, it was Margaret, and she was a very much agitated girl indeed.

"Mr. Barnaby," she began excitedly, "you must tell me about that girl. Did she really kill a man? Do you know who she is?"

Barnaby smiled down indulgently at her. His rather esthetic face, with its cool blue eyes, slender nose and thin lips, could suddenly soften into almost womanly lines—a softness that helped to draw out many a person.

"There, there," he said soothingly, "you are asking several questions all at once. I was just about to have a cup of coffee. If you will join me we will have a quiet talk."

Margaret's eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"You are playing with me, torturing me. Why can't you explain?" she insisted.

Barnaby looked really concerned.

"I'm not playing with you," he replied. "I sincerely want to help you. You are in trouble of some sort, and I want to know all about it, for only in that way can I clear up everything. Come, I'll make a bargain with you. You either know this girl or some one resembling her. You, too, feel that she has some connection with the rubies. Now, you tell me everything you know, and I'll tell you what I know; and, to begin, I'll tell you that the stabbing was not serious. The girl escaped."

Margaret sighed in relief.

"And now," went on the detective in his soothing yet compelling way, "we'll have a cup of coffee, and we'll feel better."

In spite of herself Margaret felt cheered by the cup of steaming coffee that Barnaby drew from the electric percolator. Then she settled back in her chair.

"I have no one to talk things over with," she muttered. "My mother died when I was very young, and my father, to deaden his grief, joined a mining expedition that was delving in out-of-the-way places in India. My sister Luella and I were placed in the hands of well-paid strangers and later were sent to an expensive boarding-school. We always had plenty of money." She paused, but Barnaby did not speak. He was sitting back in his chair listening deferentially, but not showing that he was carefully weighing every word of her story.

"Luella was younger than I, and different. She was very romantic, had all the adventurous spirit of our dad. At seventeen she ran away with a supposed actor. Oh, he was an impossible person, a cheap

'four-flusher' I think you would call him—a man who lived entirely by his wits, and sometimes he lived on Luella's earnings as a chorus girl——"

"You said there was plenty of money," Barnaby interrupted.

"Dad was angry at the match, and when he died, a few years afterward, he left everything to me. Luella only received five rubies that belonged to our mother."

"Did she value them?" Barnaby inquired.

"As you would value the most precious thing in your life. She swore she would starve before she parted with them, and she meant it."

"Go on," gently urged Barnaby.

"James Harcourt is my guardian. As you found out, he has been spending money recklessly, and is about desperate over some losses. He and Mr. Gaylord's people arranged a match between Pearson and me. My uncle wants the match because Mr. Gaylord is very wealthy, and the Gaylords want it because they think it will make Pearson settle down."

"How about Luella?"

"At first I saw her often and helped her," said Margaret, "but for two years Uncle James has kept us apart. Lately he blackened her character to me, pretending to have proof, until I decided to break my engagement."

"When did you last see your sister?"

"Two years ago."

"And then she had the rubies?"

"Yes, and vowed she would never part with them."

Barnaby asked permission, then lit a cigarette.

"Now, knowing her husband, do you think he ever tried to get those rubies away from her?" he asked.

Margaret's eyes flashed.

"I would think anything of him. Luella wouldn't hide the gems away. She loved them with a peculiar affection—used to say she received direct messages from our mother through them."

"Please tell me your sister's husband's name, and describe him."

"Albert Atkins. He looks to be about twenty-five, but is much older. He has black, rather stringy hair, dark eyes, and an air of easy nonchalance; dresses well."

"Thank you. Now I will tell you what happened Tuesday night. And the detective very frankly told the story as Gaylord had told it to him. At its close Margaret was leaning forward in eager interest.

"How very strange! May I see the rubies?"

Barnaby got up. "That big safe there is for ornament only and to fool inquisitive meddlers," he remarked as he pulled several books from a shelf, disclosing the door of a small wall safe.

A moment later he held out in his palm five beautiful stones that glowed with a deep fire.

"Oh, those are my sister's!" Margaret cried.

"But are you sure they are the ones that your uncle had?"

"I don't know. I could not positively answer that," she answered.

The shrill ring of a telephone bell interrupted them, and Barnaby took up the receiver.

"All right, I'll be right there," he answered the message, and turned to the girl again with "Pearson wants me at once; something important, he says, and as he wants the gems, I'll call a taxi, for I think you had better come, too."

The taxi came and they hurried away together.

Gaylord himself opened the door in answer to their ring.

"Margaret!" he cried as he saw his sweetheart.

But Margaret stepped into the little reception-room and looked about her without answering.

Gaylord drew back, disappointed at her unresponsiveness, but if the truth must be told, this elusive Margaret was taking on a new value in his eyes.

Barnaby slapped Gaylord on the shoulder.

"Cheer up, old man," he whispered, then aloud: "What news?"

"Twenty minutes ago, when I went down to my car, I found some one crouching in it."

"The girl with the tragic eyes?" asked the detective.

Gaylord nodded.

"She jumped up and, recognizing me, demanded some jewels she had hidden in the car. I told her they were safe and that I would send for them."

"You kept her here?"

"Of course. I knew you would want to question the girl, so I persuaded her to come up here and wait. She seemed worn out, as if under a great emotional strain. She is in my lounging room. I thought she was about to faint, so I sat her near an open window."

Gaylord led the way, and on entering the comfortably furnished room a strikingly beautiful girl arose from a big chair.

"Margaret!"

"Luella!"

Barnaby drew Gaylord aside for a few minutes while the girls embraced, then turned with an engaging smile. Margaret introduced the dark girl.

"My sister—Luella Atkins."

"Your *sister?*" asked Gaylord in astonishment.

"You will hear all about that presently. Just now let's hear Mrs. Atkin's story," said the detective smilingly.

"I have been trying since Tuesday to come back here," Luella exclaimed, sitting down again and turning her face gratefully to the breeze coming through the open window.

"Were you held a prisoner?" asked Barnaby.

"Well, not exactly, but I have been watched every minute. I did not think any one would find the rubies in the automobile."

"How did Uncle James get them?" asked Margaret.

Luella sat up and faced them, her dark eyes flashing.

"My husband tried in every way to get hold of them. As you know, he lives high and is always planning big schemes that usually fall through because they are not always straight. A few weeks ago he needed a lot of money. He had gone into something that promised to make millions out of thousands—for himself, anyway. Suddenly he seemed to have plenty of money, and then I discovered that my rubies were gone.

"I raved some, but he assured me they were safe with Uncle James, who accepted them as collateral for a big loan."

"I see," said Barnaby. "Go on."

"I went to the Perrimount Tuesday night, where Bert stopped when he had funds. He was not expecting me and acted with unusual hatred. He tried to get rid of me. Quite accidentally I picked up a paper and, to my astonishment, uncovered my rubies. He became terrible in his anger. Naturally I took my gems. He flew at me like a wild beast, cursing and saying the gems were still pledged. I hid the rubies in my dress and he tried to choke me—to kill me. Oh, I was terribly frightened, and when the pressure increased on my throat I groped for something to strike him with. He was bending me back over the table, and my hand grasped his open penknife. I struck at him. We both saw the blood, and he fell back while I, believing I had killed him, rushed from the room in terror.

"Two of his cronies entered as I ran out. I heard them come out again and run after me. Frightened to death, I turned the first corridor and hearing the pursuit, I opened a door. You, Mr. Gaylord, know what happened after that."

"Are these the rubies?" Barnaby took the stones from his purse and laid them on the table, where they glimmered almost balefully.

Luella leaned over them, then turned to the group.

"Yes, they are mine; Margaret knows that. I am so familiar with their appearance that I could not possibly make any mistake about them."

"And that night?" Barnaby asked.

"I was a little crazed with fear, I think, for I felt that Mr. Gaylord's car was being followed, so I hid the rubies, and when we slowed down at Forty-second street I slipped out. But one of Bert's friends was on my trail, for as I stood and took the number of Mr. Gaylord's machine I was pushed into another car and taken to a cer-

tain hangout of Bert's. I was searched, then let go, but I have been watched ever since. Bert came to see me several days ago in an effort to find out where the rubies were, but I refused to tell him." With a tragic little gesture Luella turned toward the table, and they all stared in astonishment. The rubies had vanished while the girl was speaking.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE detective was the first to recover his wits. For a moment his shrewd eyes delved into Luella's. Had she palmed the rubies? But instantly there came the counterthought that if they were hers there was no necessity for treachery. Almost simultaneously he noted an open window.

"Some one——" he muttered. The next moment he was at the window leaning far out, and on the fire-escape four stories below he saw a hurrying dark figure.

The detective measured the distance to the ground and gauged the time it would take that figure to reach it. He then figured his best chance of overtaking him.

He turned and dashed out the room. Fortunately the elevator was just reaching the floor he was on. He shouted. The operator opened the door and Barnaby slipped in.

"Make the first floor as quickly as possible; no stops," he ordered, showing his badge.

They shot downward at express speed, and he dashed out of the cage.

Through the main corridor he rushed, out of the building, around the corner, just in time to see a man seat himself at the wheel of a small black car.

There was another man standing near, a big, middle-aged man who attempted to get in the car, too, but it started suddenly, and the man sprawled across the sidewalk as the car lurched forward.

Barnaby grabbed the prostrate man and pulled him to his feet, and an exclamation escaped him.

"Harcourt," he cried.

Dazed, Margaret's uncle stared at Barnaby blankly.

"That was Atkins," he mumbled.

Barnaby laughed.

"Thanks! I wanted to be sure."

"I—I—happened to be here—recognized the car—saw him run from the back of the house——"

"You were just one second too slow thinking that up," said the detective dryly. "Mr. Harcourt, this begins to look pretty serious. You visited Atkins at the Perrimount last Tuesday night?"

"I did not," muttered the other doggedly.

"All right, then what are you doing here with Atkins to-night? He's got the rubies."

Harcourt came to life at that.

"Confound him," he raved. "But I know where he'll take 'em."

"Then we'll go there," snapped the detective, and they hurried to the front of the building. Here they found Gaylord and the girls.

"We'll use your car," announced Barnaby, ignoring Margaret's and Luella's astonishment at the sight of their uncle. "Atkins has the gems and escaped in his car."

"All right," cheerfully consented Gaylord; "hope this means excitement."

"It may mean more than you bargain for," said Barnaby sternly.

Luella stepped toward the car.

"I know most of his haunts; we must get those gems," she cried.

"You shan't leave me behind," said Margaret with determination.

The detective grew impatient.

"Pile in, then; we can't stand here all night."

Harcourt gave an address, and Gaylord started the car.

The first stop proved a disappointment. It was a pawnshop in the lower Bowery section.

The proprietor under threats convinced Barnaby he had not seen Atkins that night.

"He won't go to his regular hangout," the detective remarked as they walked toward the car. Then he turned suddenly to Luella.

"Mrs. Atkins," he said, fixing his eyes on

her, "I believe you could tell us where he is likely to be?"

Luella hesitated, then smiled pathetically.

"Not for revenge, but simple justice, for they are my gems, all that I have from my dead mother. Yes, I know of one place he would be likely to hide, where he has hidden before."

"In!" snapped Barnaby.

Fifteen minutes later they entered a soft drink saloon of the most disreputable sort. A slovenly woman looked up from drying glasses with a filthy cloth. There were no customers in the place.

"I want to see Atkins," began Barnaby.

"He is not here, hasn't been for a long time," answered the woman, her beady black eyes glaring from one to the other. But the officer noted that she did not look him in the eyes, and he stepped forward.

"Come, come, Mother Cardigan; it will be best for you not to shield him."

The old woman waved a dirty hand.

"Search the place," she invited, but Barnaby caught the sardonic grin on her hideous lips, and he turned directly to Luella.

"Do you know the secrets of this place?" he asked.

Luella hesitated, and the detective thought more of her for doing so. To tell was to betray the man whose name she bore, even though the man would not have spared her.

"I will show you, but be careful," she said presently, and she led the way to a back room.

Several tables and a number of chairs constituted the furnishings of this room.

"In there," Luella whispered; "pull away that table and push the paneling to the right. There is a little cubby-hole behind it."

Mother Cardigan shuffled after them and stood leaning against the door frame, but her hand extended along the wall of the other room and pressed a concealed button.

Barnaby, gun in hand, directed Gaylord, who pushed the table to one side, found the loose paneling, and opened it quickly.

There was a peculiar scraping noise from within, then a sound that might have been a laugh, but the cubby-hole, a cleverly concealed closet, was empty.

The detective darted inside. Those noises were unmistakable; some one had been there. His clever hands sped over the back and sides, pressing, moving, and almost instantly he found that the back of the closet moved at his touch, gliding to one side, and he stepped into a back hall. There was a door before him. It was locked, and there was no key.

"Can we force it?" asked Gaylord behind him.

"I don't think that will be necessary; the key is probably on the outside," Barnaby answered. Already he had taken a little instrument from his pocket, inserted it in the keyhole, and turned it about. A moment later he pulled the door open.

On the instant came the spit of a starting motor, and then they stood in the back alley and saw a small black car disappear around the corner into the street beyond.

"And our machine is at the front," moaned Barnaby. "If that was Albert Atkins, he has given us the slip again."

Luella, who stood in the back hallway, stooped.

"It was him," she asserted, holding out her hand, and on it, burning dully, even in the uncertain light, was one of the rubies! "Here is the evidence."

CHAPTER EIGHT

"WHAT'S to be done now?" asked Gaylord blankly.

"Back to the car first," answered the detective, in his mind putting himself in Atkins's place. What would he do under these circumstances? Where would he go? In the car he asked:

"Have you another guess, Mrs. Atkins?"

Luella shook her head.

Barnaby turned to Harcourt.

"You and Atkins have been so chummy, where do you think he'd go?"

"It's your case," snapped Harcourt sourly.

"Mrs. Atkins," Barnaby turned again, "a

man of the type of your husband always has —you will pardon my brutal frankness— may have a woman friend. Do you know such a woman?"

Luella again shook her head.

"No, Bert is not quite that sort. Women may interest him, but he is too fond of his schemes and crooked work, too fond of his own luxurious comfort."

"Ah," said Barnaby, with a sudden relieved laugh. "I've got it, I believe. You said once before that when in funds he stopped at the Perrimount. What more natural than for him to think that the safest hiding-place now? His mind would work that way, as he probably has plenty of money to squander."

They were soon nearing the big hotel. Just before reaching it Barnaby grasped Gaylord's arm and said:

"Slip into this next vacant place."

Gaylord slowed down and came to a stop at the curb.

"Three cars ahead is a familiar looking black car." Barnaby stepped out for a better look. "Yes, it is *the* car. But its being here so conspicuously troubles me. Our friend Atkins is no mean antagonist. Unless I am giving him credit for being cleverer than he really is, while I was trying to think what he would do, he thought out exactly what I would do. He won't register there, but he may hang around for a while thinking it the safest place. Anyway, I'm going to have a look.

"Mrs. Atkins, I think you had better come with me, as you know him. You others wait here, but *keep your motor running,* Gaylord."

Barnaby and Luella walked up the street, and the detective deliberately glanced into the small black car.

"No one there, but I feel sure this is a trick. Now, we'll step into the entrance and walk right across the lobby and out the side exit. You use your eyes, glance quickly everywhere, and if you see him, without turning toward me tell me where he is standing and what he is wearing."

Luella assured Barnaby she understood directions, and they entered the big hotel by the main entrance.

Harcourt, in the meantime, had left the party as they reached the hotel.

They passed through the lobby. Luella was sure her husband was not among the loungers on the chairs nor in the groups standing about. They passed out the side entrance toward the front of the hotel and started toward their car.

"Oh," gasped Luella, for neither the small black car nor Gaylord's were anywhere in sight!

Barnaby whistled softly.

"Rather expected it," he remarked.

He stood thinking for a minute.

"It's like this, Mrs. Atkins," he explained presently: "Atkins thought there was a chance we would come here, but he wanted to *know,* so he left his car there, then watched the entrance. Whether he saw how we arrived or not, I don't know, but when he thought we were safely inside he made tracks. Gaylord is doubtless on his trail."

"And what will we do?" anxiously asked Luella as she recalled that her sister was perhaps speeding toward danger. She had reason to know how cruel her husband could be if trapped.

The detective turned and walked back toward the hotel.

"Gaylord's no fool," he said. "He'll get word to me somehow."

"But where?"

"Right here. He left us here, and he'll know I'll wait here until he returns."

They re-entered the hotel, and Barnaby found secluded seats from which they could see every one entering by the main entrance.

The hands of a clock within range of their vision crept toward the hour of eleven.

Presently the chimes struck.

"Eleven o'clock," said Luella. "It seems ridiculous to sit here, just waiting."

Barnaby smiled.

"More is to be gained that way sometimes than by groping in the dark, Mrs. Atkins," he answered. "We haven't the slightest idea where they went. If we rush wildly around Gaylord can't find us. No, our game is 'watchful waiting.'"

Another half hour, then an hour passed. Barnaby turned to Luella.

"I would suggest your taking a taxi home, only I don't believe you would go?" he half questioned.

Luella bit her lips and her dark eyes flashed.

"No, not till I know that Margaret is safe. It is about time I thought of her. All my life I have been willful and selfish, but she——"

"Mr. Scott—Mr. Ray—*Mr.* Barrnumum," mechanically called out a bellboy as he passed.

Barnaby was after him like a shot.

"What's that last name?" he demanded.

"Mr. Scott—Mr. Ray—Mr. Barnumby," replied the boy with maddening slowness.

"All right. I'm Barnaby. Which phone?"

The boy pointed in the general direction of the booths, and Barnaby hurried across the lobby.

"Yes—yes?" he called into a telephone a minute later.

"Hold the line, please," came central's quiet voice, and then after a minute's silence: "The line is disconnected."

Barnaby turned to the operator.

"What chance of finding out where that call came from?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not much," the girl began; then she suddenly held up her hand, speaking into the receiver. "Yes—hold the line this time; here's your party, Mr. Barnaby. Number six."

The detective hurried into the booth and eagerly took up the receiver. "Barnaby speaking; who is it?" he called.

"Come at once to the foot of Treadway avenue, the Bronx, and bring help," came a peculiarly muffled voice.

"Who's speaking? Gaylord?" insisted Barnaby.

"Can't talk; just come," came the voice again and rang off.

Barnaby called up headquarters, chatted with the captain, then went back to Luella and explained the situation.

"I'm going with you," she said decidedly.

The officer had doubts of the wisdom of this, but he really liked her courageous spirit, and did not protest very much.

They were waiting in front of the hotel when an automobile with four plain-clothes men stopped for them, and a moment later they were headed for the Bronx.

When they turned into Treadway avenue Barnaby noted that it was a new street with a big apartment house on each corner. There were new apartment buildings lining each side, several in course of construction, and farther on a number of vacant lots.

"Looks like the dropping-off place," one of the plain-clothes men remarked.

But just then, in the darkness before them, loomed the outline of an old house, and in front of it the darker shapes of two automobiles.

"Stop this side," Barnaby told the chauffeur, and the car stopped.

"There's a light in the front room," went on the detective. "Two of you guard the front, one the rear, and the fourth can try to get in the house from the back, but don't come near me unless I call or fire. Mrs. Atkins, you stay in the car."

The men went to their posts, and Barnaby stepped softly onto the front porch and peered through a tear in the shade.

The room was poorly lighted by a flickering gasjet, and the furnishings were very meagre—a table, several chairs, and a telephone on the mantel. Two men stood in the centre of the room. The younger one, with coat and hat on, was evidently anxious to be off, as he made several movements toward the door. The older man seemed angry, arguing some point with such vehemence that neither of them heard anything when Barnaby unlocked the door from the outside and stepped into the dark hallway. Here their voices reached him.

"I wished to God you'd shut up!" a snarling voice rasped. "I've told you I'll split. You'll get your money from the insurance company, too."

"But that's only what I lent you," a deeper but very angry voice, that of Harcourt, answered.

"Well, don't keep me here arguing. Let me cash in the damn stones. That detective you were fool enough to put on the track of the rubies ain't as big a fool as you are."

"No, he isn't," said Barnaby quietly as

he pushed open the door and covered the two men with his gun. "You're both wanted," he went on.

Atkins, by a quick movement, had stepped behind the table, and he stood leaning his hands on it. He was a handsome youngster at first glance, and then one noticed the shiftiness of his dark eyes and the cruelty of his thin lips.

"Hello," he grinned, showing small, sharp teeth. "What might we be wanted for, Mr. Detective?"

"A number of things," answered Barnaby. "You might be wanted for assault on your wife. Then there's the robbery of Mr. Gaylord's apartment where you stole five rubies, and last, but not at all least, helping Mr. Harcourt to cheat the insurance company."

Harcourt started to say something, but Atkins shut him off, then laughed aloud. He leaned forward again in an attitude of indifference that did not at all fool Barnaby. The detective had seen his kind before and knew that he was the most dangerous type of criminal, for he could and would shoot as quickly as he would laugh.

"Assault my wife, eh?" A sudden wicked gleam flashed from the dark eyes. "Well, it happens the rubies are mine; she gave them to me as a wedding present," he added with another laugh.

Suddenly Atkins straightened and his expression changed; the eyes narrowed, the lips drew back in an expression of hatred. Barnaby guessed what it meant and half turned with a gesture of warning.

With a speed that seemed impossible Atkins leaped across the table, snatched the detective's gun, drew another from his own pocket and stood glaring, one gun covering Barnaby, the other Luella, who stood gazing in fascinated horror from the doorway.

"Come in, little Luella," sneered Atkins. "I got a little reckoning with you. My dear, you ought to be shot right there, but I'm going to let you live long enough to tell you a few things, then good-by, Luella."

The detective knew that, while he had murder in his heart, Atkins's conceit and love for the dramatic would not permit him to kill his wife until he tortured her a little, so, while chagrined at his own negligence, he was far more alert than his dejected attitude indicated.

"You always was a disappointment to me," Atkins snarled, his face quivering with hatred. "Thought I'd get a bag of money with you. You double-crossed me every chance you got. Oh, I sat on the fire-escape and heard you tell your pitiful story, and when you turned your back I took those cursed stones. Then you brought the detective to my hiding-place, then here. Now you'll get all that's coming to you!"

A baleful light gleamed in his dark eyes as he took a more deliberate aim and fired.

CHAPTER NINE

BETWEEN the steadying of that aim and the shot several things happened. Barnaby sprang forward. Harcourt also jumped, reached Atkins first, and struck up his arm. The shot rang out, and Harcourt pluckily closed with Atkins. In the scuffle for the guns one of the revolvers suddenly exploded and Atkins fell limp.

At this moment the plain-clothes men rushed in. With them came Gaylord and Margaret, whom the police had found locked in a back room.

Harcourt turned to Luella.

"Are you hurt?" he demanded.

"No, no," Luella sobbed in fright. "Is —is *he* killed?"

Barnaby lifted Atkins to a chair.

"Not killed, but seriously wounded. It was lucky you jumped, Harcourt, or that first shot would have reached your niece."

Margaret ran to Luella, and they clung to each other.

"How did you find out where we were?" Margaret asked her sister.

"The detective got Mr. Gaylord's telephone message," answered Luella.

Margaret stared at her.

"Mr. Gaylord's message?" she repeated. "Why, he couldn't telephone. We were locked up every minute."

Atkins opened his eyes.

"What's that?" he asked, trying to look

around the room. "Some one telephoned Barnaby where to come to-night? Some glared at Harcourt.

one—why, you sneak, it was you," and he

The old man nodded.

"After all," he said, "blood is thicker than water, and your schemes were pretty thin, Atkins. The girls are my nieces. To-night when you and your cronies lured us down here and trapped us, you would have locked me up, too. I had to pretend to be with you and against Gaylord and Margaret. Then, when you were outside with Bill and Evans, I called up the Perrimount, and I kept you arguing until help arrived."

Margaret came forward impulsively, but Harcourt held up his hand.

"You're pretty far gone, Atkins. I want you to tell how much *I* had to do with cheating the insurance company."

Atkins started to sneer, but a paroxysm of pain racked his body.

"Guess I'm off," he said with an attempt at a grin. "Well, if it does you any good, I'll tell that I didn't take the rubies out of your safe, for they were never put in it. You remember we went to the insurance company, then to your library. I palmed them under your nose, Harcourt, and you *thought* you had put them away."

"Harcourt didn't conspire with you to get the insurance?" Barnaby asked sharply.

"No, he thought he had the gems," and Atkins laid back wearily.

"One more question, Atkins," the detective prodded. "How did the marks get on the safe and on the window at Harcourt's?"

Atkins opened his eyes; then he laughed again.

"I went back that night—wanted it to look like a reg'lar robbery. Got in without any trouble and scratched the safe a bit. Even opened it and took out a little spending money. Say," he screamed suddenly, "don't turn that light out; I can only see those damned blood rubies—gleaming—gleaming——" His voice trailed into silence.

Barnaby leaned over and shook him gently.

"Atkins," he cried, "was Harcourt with you the day you held up and searched Gaylord's car?"

The crook roused himself with an effort.

"Harcourt? No. It was my pal, Evans."

"And the night you took the rubies from Gaylord's, was Harcourt with you?"

Atkins had just strength enough to shake his head.

"I wasn't with him, Barnaby," Harcourt put in; "I did spend Margaret's money recklessly, was desperate and tried to marry her off to good advantage, but I'm not a thief."

Barnaby turned to the officers.

"Give a hand here, boys; we'll get him to a hospital. He may have a chance."

But Atkins died that night, and a very humble Luella made her peace with a still more humble uncle.

For Barnaby the case was closed, but he could not resist one little peep into the future, so a few days later he called up Gaylord.

"By the way, which girl won out with you?" he asked, "the quiet Margaret or the 'most beautiful girl you ever saw?' "

Gaylord laughed heartily. "You'll have to wait till you get the invitation," he answered.

Chinese Smugglers

THE customs officers of San Francisco have to deal with some of the most artful smugglers in the world. The Chinese are a race of smugglers, and there is not a people on earth more fertile in expedients to evade the revenue laws. Their stolid, impressive demeanor serves them admirably in their contraband operations, for their actions seldom afford, as in the case frequently with white people, any ground to suspect they are trying to practice a fraud. They have taught the sailor men of the white race the shrewdest trick practiced on Uncle Sam's tax gatherers, and are never caught in one device without being ready with another one equally as hard to detect.

Before the influx of Chinese laborers was stopped, a Mongol, looking as if all his years were acquainted with only poverty and toil, would sometimes try to sneak ashore with a dirty old blouse stuffed full of fine silk handkerchiefs and scarfs and Indian neck shawls. The Chinese garment for cold weather is a quilted blouse or tunic, with a heavy filling of cotton. Silk handkerchiefs being light and fine, a single blouse would sometimes contain a valuable invoice.

Sometimes a demure Chinese maiden would step ashore with the thick soles of her shoes stuffed with silk. A whole covey arrived some years ago with their shoes stuffed in this fashion. An inquisitive inspectator had his attention attracted to the extraordinary thickness of the soles and made an investigation, which resulted in a valuable seizure.

To a man the Chinese crews on the steamers plying between San Francisco and Mexico, South America and the Orient are smugglers. They hide their contraband goods in the oddest places imaginable, and get them ashore past the eyes of the customs officers in ways that almost baffles detection.

They have brought opium skillfully stuffed in bananas still hanging to the stalk and in oranges. One day, several years ago, a Chinese, dressed as a cook, walked leisurely down the gangplank of a Pacific Mail steamer with a baasket on his arm, containing several loaves of bread. He shuffled right by a customs house officer, and would have got away all right, but on the wharf came into collision with a drunken sailor. The sailor, who was to blame, gave the Chinese a violent shove, sending him sprawling and scattering his bread loaves. A policeman interfered and noticed that one of the loaves had broken open. He started to examine, and the Chinese started to run. Every loaf of bread was filled with opium.

Chinese have been detected with boxes of the drug deftly bound up in their queues or tied under their arms. Every bit of baggage and every article they take ashore is a hiding-place.

Beams on ship and table legs have been hollowed out as receptacles for contraband opium. False bottoms are put in cubby holes and pantry drawers. Hiding-places are sought in coal bunkers and under the engines and boilers. The methods of secretion are so varied and ingenious that frequently the officers are unable to find smuggled opium, even after they have definite information that it is aboard a vessel. Only recently the officers failed to find a lot, although they knew positively that it was on board. However, keeping the closest watch on everything that left the ship, they finally intercepted the opium as it was being taken ashore.

Green Eyes

By EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER

CHAPTER ONE

"THIS sure is fierce," Inspector Trailor growled throatily from the depths of an easy-chair in Detective David Thorne's bachelor apartment. "The harder we try, the worse matters seem to get. The town is on its ear and looking for somebody's scalp. I have a prickling under my hair which says that that same scalp is mine. Folks are hammering the department. The newspapers are pounding us in spite of the fact that we are working day and night. In the last three weeks we have pulled in more crooks——"

"We haven't nabbed the right one," Thorne interrupted, swinging away from the window so as to face Inspector Trailor. "We must get Green Eyes."

"Green Eyes, eh?"

The detective nodded.

"Easier said than done," Trailor grumbled, settling his big frame more comfortably into his chair, his ruddy face troubled. "Lots easier said than done," he repeated. "We've been after that bird for months. What have we got? A jailful of crooks, a lot of big jobs pulled off and a will-o'-the-wisp laughing at us up his sleeve. Can you beat it? Huh! Who is this Green Eyes? What is he? Where does he keep himself? Huh! Get him? What else have we been trying to do?"

"Well, we got the Shadow, didn't we?" Thorne asked. "He was a clever crook, too. We got him and his outfit, didn't we?"

"We landed the Shadow all right," Trailor agreed.

"Well, we'll nab Green Eyes, too. So buck up!"

"We got the Shadow," Trailor muttered reminiscently, "when we put Denver Dan over the jumps and made him squeal. He had nerve, Denver Dan had, and he sure went through hell before we broke him. He never did get over that third degree. Ugh! he went nutty after a while, you know. We pinched the Shadow, though, and sent him up the river to die." He paused thoughtfully. "But we haven't laid our hands on any of Green Eyes's gang yet, so as to make him squeal. We haven't——"

"Just the same we'll get that master crook," Thorne insisted confidently.

"Our work's sure cut out for us, then."

"It is."

"Wonder what Green Eyes will pull next," Trailer mused.

"I wonder," Thorne echoed.

The shadows were growing thick in the room, so Trailor lighted the reading lamp at his elbow. With the same motion he took a cigar from the humidor on the table and applied a match to it with the utmost deliberation. The detective turned to the window again, and stood staring into the gathering dusk, while Trailor lazily blew smoke-rings toward the ceiling. For a time there was no sound in the room save the ticking of the clock above the fireplace as Inspector Trailor of the city police and David Thorne, criminal investigator, racked their brains over the crook known as Green Eyes and his bold activities.

"He never pulls the same stunt twice." Thorne spoke his thoughts aloud.

"He never does," Trailor agreed.

"So we can always expect something startling," said the detective.

"Anyway, in spite of this bird and whatever devilment he is now planning"—the inspector sighed—"I reckon I'll just toddle along home." He rose stiffly and tossed his cigar-butt into a convenient ash-tray.

"You'll be around later? My daughter Kathleen is expecting you."

"I'll drop in about eight-thirty," Thorne answered.

"All right, son," Trailor yawned. "You engaged folks make me laugh," he chuckled as he went out.

"Trailor's right," Thorne muttered as he settled into the chair which the inspector had just vacated and picked up a magazine. "Green Eyes is certainly one hard nut to crack. He's clever, but so was the Shadow, as clever as they make them. We got him. We completely broke Denver Dan, the poor devil, but a detective cannot be too finicky as to his means to an end. The big thing is to land our man. The best of them slip up sooner or later. He'll overplay his hand one of these times, and then——"

His voice trailed off into nothingness, and he became absorbed in an article that had to do with rays of absolutely colorless light, which the writer argued would make any material invisible. After a time the telephone shrilled at his elbow. It startled him.

"That you, Kathleen?" he asked. "I've been reading.—Who? Your dad?—He has not come home?—It's eight o'clock?—He left here an hour ago.—Said he was going home. Don't worry, dear. I'll get in touch with him and let you know when I come over. In about thirty minutes. The inspector knows how to take care of himself. Good-by, dear."

He hung up, got to his feet slowly, and stood staring down at the telephone.

"Trailor said he was going home," he murmured. "I wonder——"

He took up the telephone and hurriedly called number after number. His efforts however, were in vain. Trailor had not appeared at headquarters, nor was he in any of his usual haunts.

"I can't quite get this," the detective growled as he began pacing up and down with long strides. "Trailor—well, it isn't at all like the inspector."

The jangle of the telephone made him jump. As he listened to the voice on the wire he staggered back. His eyelids, habitually drooping, lifted, and a cry died upon his lips.

"Green Eyes!" he gasped, dropping the instrument as though it was burning his flesh. "Green Eyes! He says Trailor will die at midnight, and it's nearly nine o'clock now!"

CHAPTER TWO

THORNE, although he was outwardly unperturbed, cool and collected, was tingling to his fingertips when he burst into police headquarters.

"Green Eyes has captured Trailor!" he announced, and his voice was as cold as ice.

His hearers could only stare and gasp.

"Got Trailor about two hours ago," Thorne explained hastily. "That crook just had me on the phone to tell me that the inspector dies at midnight!"

Eyes flashed and jaws tightened at this news.

"It may be too late," Thorne went on, "but watch every exit from the city. We've got to save the inspector. Patrol the river. Mum's the word. Don't let any reporters in on this. Hustle, men! We have less than three hours in which to beat Green Eyes and his dirty game."

While police boats patroled the river detectives were fine-tooth-combing the city and its environs in search of the missing inspector. Under the trees, about half a block from his apartment, Thorne found a narrow strip of grass along the curb torn up, as if by struggling feet. In the gutter he found the oval of a broken cuff-link, which he recognized as Trailor's.

"Here's where they got him," he told his two companions. "Which way did they take him? That's the question now."

At the first street intersection they searched the macadam very carefully for wheel marks, and found some new ones.

"Right to the country," Thorne muttered. "Left to the city and the Rookeries. Which?"

It was decided to turn left.

Just beyond the left turning they came upon the rest of the broken cuff-link.

"This may be a false lead," Thorne told

the other men, "but I believe Trailor's trying to help us. It's taking a long chance, men, but this is a case of do or die. I feel that Green Eyes has dragged his prisoner into the mazes of the Rookeries. That's our best bet."

They climbed into their car and sped away through the crooked streets that led toward the river and the ramshackle tangle of buildings which had been dubbed the Rookeries.

"You men wait here," Thorne ordered as he jumped to the pavement. "Have your guns ready and be on your toes for a quick getaway. I'm going into the Pig's place. If you hear my whistle, follow me. I may need you. Smash your way in if necessary."

Thorne turned the corner, instinctively cautious. He found himself in a narrow, deserted street that ran straight away from him to the river, which lay silvered with the moonlight. The two- and three-storied buildings on either side peered down upon him through unshuttered windows that seemed, for all the world, like empty eye-sockets. There was only one light visible. Thorne approached this, stole down the short flight of stone steps, and, with a revolver gripped in his hand, pushed into the Pig's basement saloon. He bolted the door behind him. The room was damp and stuffy with the odors of tobacco and stale beer. The Pig himself, red-faced, flabby-jowled, his black hair slicked down over his receding forehead, was the sole occupant of the place. With an ugly look in his little eyes he stared at the intruder from behind the cash register.

"Closing up, Pig?"

"Looks like I'm doin' that," growled the dive keeper. "Wot's th' big idee, anyway?"

"I'm playing a hunch."

"Playin' a hunch, Mr. Thorne?"

"I want to go through the secret passage."

"Why, Mr. Thorne"—the Pig voiced his startled surprise, but there was a sudden fear in his eyes—"that passage has been boarded up fer months."

"Forget that line of talk, Pig!" snapped Thorne. "Open up! I'm in a hurry! Folks have gone through to-night, and I'm trailing them. Hustle!"

"Honest to——"

"Cut the kicking! Get busy!"

With the ugly "o" of the automatic eating into his heart, the Pig quickly decided that discretion was by far the better part of valor.

"Any monkeyshines like warning the gang below," Thorne cautioned, "and I wouldn't take the short end of a thousand-to-one shot on your being alive to-morrow."

"I'll play square," the Pig grumbled.

"You'd better—if you're wise."

The Pig touched a hidden spring and a broad panel in the rear wall swung outward noiselessly.

"Sorry," Thorne apologized, "but I'll have to tie you up. Hold out your hands!"

In a twinkling he had the man gagged and trussed up like a fowl for market and huddled in a corner of the bar. Then he turned off the gaslights and groped through the secret doorway, down a flight of wooden steps and along a boarded tunnel, at the far end of which he made out a faint glow. As he tiptoed along he heard a muffled voice.

"I've been wanting to get you, Trailor." The voice was vibrant with feeling. "You and that fellow Thorne. I'm going to croak you both, but before I do I want to give each of you a taste of the hell you are always so ready to hand out to others. I hate you! I hate you! I want——"

"Hands up!" Thorne commanded, bursting in upon them.

A frail, slight figure, clad in a gray gown and hood, was leaning over Trailor, who was naked to the waist and stretched upon the floor helplessly bound under a hooded electric light. This individual straightened with a jerk and stared into the muzzle of Thorne's automatic with eyes glowing balefully green through slits in the gray hood.

"Hands up, I told you!" Thorne reiterated.

Slowly, reluctantly, Green Eyes's hands went ceilingward. In his right palm Thorne saw a tiny vial.

"Too late, Green Eyes!" Trailor exulted.

"The cat has played with the mouse a trifle too long!"

The crook was silent.

"Can you roll over here, Trailor?" Thorne asked.

"Just now I think I can do anything," Trailor grunted.

In the low-beamed, spider-webbed room there was no sound save Trailor's labored breathing as he worked his bulk across the mildewed boards. Green Eyes was grinding his teeth in helpless rage. His eyes, a cold green like deep-sea water, were repulsive and cruel. The detective shivered as he stared into their inscrutable depths. The crook's upraised hand was going back slowly, almost imperceptibly.

"None of that!" Thorne snapped, sensing the other's intention. "Back against the wall! Quick! Drop that stuff!"

The small bottle splintered on the boards, and a thin vapor lifted as the acid ate into the wood. Keeping him covered, Thorne stooped and deftly cut the ropes that bound Trailor.

"Thanks!" gasped the inspector, pulling himself awkwardly to his feet and staring at the broken bits of glass. "That stuff was intended to spoil my beauty, Thorne. You were just in time."

"The game's up, Green Eyes!" Thorne laughed. "The play's over—for you. Hold out your hands for the bracelets!"

But just then the light suddenly blinked out and the planks under their feet trembled. Trailor and Thorne leaped back just as the floor crashed downward into the darkness. There came the sound of running water, the asthmatic coughing of a motor-boat and soft, silvery, mocking laughter.

"I'll get you again, Trailor!" Green Eyes sneered from somewhere below them. "You're my meat now, you and Thorne!"

In the silence that ensued the two men slowly stumbled back through the tunnel and up the wooden stairs. Thorne forgot the trussed-up Pig, and they hurried out into the moon-flooded street. As they emerged from far away there came the faint ringing of chimes, proclaiming the hour of midnight.

CHAPTER THREE

"I'VE phoned Kathleen that you're all right," Thorne was saying an hour later in his rooms. "She wants you to hurry home. I wouldn't tell her about what happened."

"You had the right dope about where I was imprisoned," Trailor smiled.

"I played a long-shot," Thorne laughed, "and I won. That is all. It was all guesswork, though, for I hadn't a clue to your whereabouts."

"Green Eyes's gang dropped down on me out of the trees," Trailor explained. "They must have been on the watch. I was walking along, thinking of our discussion. Blooey! A cloud, soft and black, fell down over my head. I tried to yell, but couldn't. Then I fought, but was helpless. Next I heard a car draw up, and was bundled into it. I kept scrapping. As we turned the corner I almost flung myself and my captors from the car. I reckon that accounts for the piece of cuff-link you found there. Then the lights went out completely, and I didn't know anything until just a little while before you arrived."

"Feeling all right now?" the detective asked solicitously.

"Feeling fine!" Trailor replied. "It riles me that Green Eyes slipped through our fingers, though. You had him cold. He's gunning for us. He told me that his main business now is to get us. His other work is just incidental. From now on everything else is off until he puts the finishing touches on you and me. That's what he said."

"That's sweet music!"

"I'll toddle along now," Trailor sighed. "This night has been pretty strenuous for an aging man."

"You have an escort?"

"My men are waiting in the hall."

"Good-night! Tell Kathleen I'll be seeing her soon."

"I don't know how to thank you."

"Forget it!" Thorne laughed.

The door shut behind the grizzled inspector, and the detective heard him chatting to his men as they moved down the hall to the elevator. Thorne yawned sleep-

ily and turned off the lights. As he started toward his bedroom he saw a shadowy form cross the rectangle of the window, which was dimly lighted from the outside. He put his police whistle to his lips and blew a shrill blast, at the same time backing against the wall. Then a revolver barked, a tongue of fire licked through the blackness, and bits of glass tinkled to the table-top. Thorne fired into the darkness where the flash had appeared. There came the thunder of fists on the door.

"Open in the name of the law!" Trailor shouted.

"Law?" Green Eyes mocked from across the room.

Then the door smashed from its hinges, and the officers came tumbling in.

"Take that, Trailor!" Green Eyes snarled, firing point-blank into the huddle of men. "And that!" as he brought his revolver butt down upon a luckless skull.

"Thorne!" Trailor called. "He missed me."

"I'm all right," Thorne assured him. "The electric switch is to the right of the door. The bulb's smashed in the reading-lamp."

Trailor found the switch and flooded the room with light.

"We've got you this time, Green Eyes!" Trailor gloated. "There are no flopping floors here. You can't——"

He broke off abruptly, blinking around stupidly. Thorne stood by the table holding his automatic. A bluecoat leaned against the wall nursing his wrist, from which blood was dripping to the carpet. The other officer lay tumbled upon the floor, still stunned by the blow he had received. The crook was nowhere to be seen. They searched the rooms, but he had disappeared. The windows were all fastened from the inside.

"Slipped out through the door during the mix-up." Trailor grunted his disgust.

They searched through the building, but the crook had vanished as completely as a bubble fades into the air. It was as if he had never been in Thorne's apartment. The wounded officers, however, were eloquent contradiction of that.

"Any one go out?" Trailor demanded of the old doorman.

"Only a woman," the doorman admitted after much thought; "only a slip of a girl, sir."

"Can you beat that?" Trailor growled.

CHAPTER FOUR

"WHERE'S Kathleen?" Thorne asked as he dropped in upon the Trailors later that morning. "I thought we might go out to lunch together."

"I'm expecting her any minute now," the inspector told him. "Sit down and make yourself comfortable. Lunch is very nearly ready. Have a snack with us."

"All right. Thanks."

"Kathleen's been gone since ten o'clock this morning. Smoke?" and Trailor offered his pocket-case. "It's nearly twelve now."

"Feeling none the worse for last night?" Thorne queried.

"Better if anything," Trailor chuckled. "Had all the glooms scared out of me."

"You didn't tell Kathleen?"

"Not a word."

Then the door banged open and Brown, the chauffeur, burst in upon them. He was evidently in a high state of nervous excitement.

"Well?" Trailor paused in the act of lighting a cigar.

"Miss Trailor——" Brown began.

"Steady!" Trailor warned.

"Miss Trailor isn't in the car, sir!"

"What's that?" snapped Thorne.

"When I stopped at the entrance, sir," Brown went on wretchedly, "and opened the door to help Miss Trailor to alight, the car was empty. Only the bundles, sir. Miss Trailor wasn't there. She was gone, sir."

"Tell us just what happened, Brown." Trailor's voice was thick with emotion.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Did anything out of the ordinary occur?" Thorne asked.

"Not that I know of," Brown replied hopelessly. "At ten this morning we started downtown. I drove Miss Trailor to sev-

eral shops. At eleven-forty-five she entered the car and told me to drive her home. She complained of a headache, sir, and asked me to draw all the curtains. I did, and then we nosed out into the traffic."

"Anything happen on the way uptown?" Thorne questioned.

"Nothing, sir."

"You drove straight home? You——"

"Not exactly, sir," Brown broke in. "We were caught in a traffic jam for something like ten minutes. Until things got going again I was talking with the driver of the car redolent with a subtle, sense-luring chap, sir. He had me laughing fit to kill all the time, sir."

"And you saw nothing happening to my daughter?" Trailor blurted out impatiently.

"Nothing wrong, sir, until I arrived here."

"Green Eyes must be responsible!" Trailor groaned.

"He's letting no grass grow under his feet," Thorne added.

Upon investigation they found the closed car redolent with a subtle, sense-luring perfume.

"Drugged by this stuff—whatever it is," Thorne whispered to Trailor, "and stolen from the car during the traffic tie-up. While Brown was giving all his attention to the funny fellow on his right those devils carried Kathleen out through the left door. That's how this job was pulled."

Under the string of one of the many packages piled upon the seat they found a narrow strip of light-green paper.

"To David Thorne and Inspector Trailor," Detective Thorne read in a voice scarcely audible. "Kathleen Trailor is my hostage. It is she or you men now. There are things that are worse than death. The sins of the fathers. You must act and act quickly if you wish to save her. Your lives for hers!"

"Trying to get us through Kathleen!" Trailor breathed like a spent runner. "That crook is the devil himself!"

"I'd like to get my fingers on his throat!" Thorne gasped. "I'd laugh as I choked the soul out of his evil body!"

CHAPTER FIVE

HOURS later, after Night had dropped her obliterating curtains over the city, Thorne and Trailor, their faces drawn and their eyes haggard, were in Trailor's private office at headquarters. Trailor slumped in a chair; Thorne was pacing the floor like a caged animal. They had scoured the highways and the byways with no tangible results. Kathleen Trailor had disappeared as completely as if she had never been.

"I'm thinking of Kathleen!" Thorne groaned. "She is in the clutches of a fiend!"

"He won't harm her." Trailor voiced his hopes doggedly. "He wants us. He's holding Kathleen until he gets us. He's——"

"He'll torture her," Thorne cut in. "He'll torture her to make us suffer. He'll—— I'm going. That's all settled."

"There's no other way?" Trailor queried.

"She must be suffering. Kathleen needs me," Thorne retorted. "It's the only way. I'm going to try a plan."

Trailor nodded reluctantly.

"Shadow me!" Thorne whispered to Trailor, glancing around furtively, fearful lest some spy might catch his words. "If Green Eyes nabs me he will carry me to Kathleen. That will be the chance we're looking for, Trailor. You can follow with your men, swoop down, and——"

The telephone shrilled stridently.

"I'll answer," Trailor said, turning to his desk like a weary old man.

He put the receiver to his ear. Then his eyes widened with horror and his jaw dropped.

"Oh, Lord!" he exclaimed in bitter anguish.

"What is it?" Thorne demanded, seizing the instrument from the inspector's shaking hands.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" thrilled into Thorne's ears and stabbed him to the heart. "Oh!" All the anguish of a soul undergoing the tortures of the damned and then deadly silence.

"Kathleen! Kathleen!" Thorne called brokenly.

There was no answer. In a wild rage he

tore the telephone from its fastenings and hurled it across the room.

"Trail me!" Thorne flung at Trailor, and with that he was gone.

CHAPTER SIX

THORNE had rushed from headquarters like a madman. Obeying a blind instinct, he next hastened down to the Rookeries. He had gone to the Pig's place only to find it deserted, the door unlocked, the low moon stripped of everything. Gun in hand, he tiptoed across the room. As he groped along the rear wall, seeking the hidden spring in the darkness, the lock of the street door clicked. He caught the sound, sharp and clear in the stillness.

"Trapped!" he laughed grimly to himself. "It's up to Trailor now. Green Eyes has evidently swallowed the bait, hook, line and sinker."

Something struck him on the head.

Then he plunged headlong into pitchy blackness, seemingly wrapped in a clinging mass of soft cobwebs.

He was soon recovered, his senses alert. He essayed to sit up, but his efforts were wasted, as he was encircled with ropes from his ankles to his neck, and a strange, sickening odor emanated from them.

"Kill a man," a soft voice was purring below and above and on both sides of him it seemed, "and you relieve him of all suffering; beat him, and when his wounds heal he will forget; fill him with fear, strike terror to his heart and you have broken his spirit forever. Fear lives and lives and fattens upon itself."

"So that is your philosophy, Green Eyes," Thorne sneered weakly. "You are a fool!"

"We shall see!"

The voice gradually grew fainter and fainter like a breeze receding through the trees. Suddenly from all around there came sibilant spittings, rustlings of dry bodies, as if over silk, puffings and intermittent rattlings.

"Snakes!" Thorne gasped, goose-flesh creeping along his spine, his hair prickling at the roots.

There came a crash and a jangle of glass. The shufflings and the puffings and the rattlings increased. Thorne shivered and sweat poured from him as he listened.

"Make a man afraid," the soft voice resumed.

"You are wasting your time." Thorne tried to shout, but his voice was only a dry rattle in his throat.

Mocking laughter sounded in his ears. Thorne's teeth chattered as he felt scaly bodies squirming over his feet. A cold breath fanned his cheeks. Something brushed lightly across his face. Thorne's nerves broke and he shrieked. Then he was whisked away, to be tumbled heavily upon a hard floor.

Slowly the light grew, and he gradually made out the long, low, narrow tapestried room in which he lay stretched prone upon his back. Rolling his eyes around, he saw that he was reclining at the foot of a massive chair that was backed by a high mirror. A woman was drooping in the chair.

"Kathleen!" Thorne exclaimed in a voice which was little more than a whisper.

The woman stirred, lifted her head wearily, opened her eyes slowly, as though awakening from a deep sleep, and stared around wildly. Then she jerked herself erect and leaned forward.

"He has brought you here, too?" Kathleen asked, terror in her eyes.

"What happened?" Thorne queried.

"In the traffic jam," she explained, "I went to sleep in spite of the fact that my head was aching. I wakened with a strange, sweet smell in my nostrils. As though from far away I heard Brown's laughter and the noises of the street. I tried to rise. I was too weak. I tried to call. I could only gasp. Then the door of the car opened, and I knew no more."

"Are you hurt?" asked Thorne.

"No, and you?" she questioned as she took her head in negation.

Thorne was about to say more, but changed his mind as the draperies parted and Green Eyes appeared, completely concealed in his gray gown and hood.

"Lover's meeting!" he sneered. "All we need to make this party complete is the presence of Inspector Trailor."

Kathleen and Thorne appeared not to hear him.

"Her hell and yours, too, Thorne, is just beginning," Green Eyes continued. "I wish that Trailor were here."

As he finished he clapped his hands together sharply. On the instant a huge gray-gowned and gray-hooded figure materialized, bearing a cage alive with squirming rats, as well as a long, heavy steel-wire contrivance and a slender, gleaming, curved sword. Green Eyes took the sword and the cage of rats, which he set at his feet, and pointed to Thorne. The steel meshwork was dropped over his prone body, his head and his feet protruding, and clamped to the floor. It fitted closely around his ankles and his feet protruding, and clamped to the Eyes was carefully examining the curved blade. His task finished, the gray figure withdrew as silently as he had come.

"This is a little contrivance of my own," the crook gloated, indicating the cage, as he paced up and down, his loose gown rustling as he walked. "This framework is covered with strong steel wire and consists of six distinct compartments. You are helplessly bound, Thorne. You cannot move hand or foot. Furthermore, you are clamped in the cage. These little gates"—he stooped to touch the partitions—"lift automatically at fixed intervals. As you have no doubt noticed, both of you, your ropes, Thorne, give off a most peculiar odor. They are soaked in a substance that serves to make these hungry rodents only the more ravenous."

He came to a stop in front of them and let his green eyes wander from Kathleen to the helpless man at her feet.

"I will give you this," the scoundrel spoke slowly, bowing to Kathleen, who watched him in fascinated horror. "This blade is especially keen. It will cut well."

He laid the sword in her lap. She seized it quickly and lunged desperately at her torturer, who sprang away with a taunting laugh.

"You misunderstand," the crook told her. "The sword is not for me. I shall turn these rats loose in the compartment that encloses your lover's ankles. They will eat away the ropes. Their hunger will become insatiable. They will eat——"

Kathleen choked back a scream and covered her eyes with her hands. Thorne groaned in spite of himself.

"You see," Green Eyes went on relentlessly, "Miss Trailor, you are able to lean forward, although you are chained in your chair. The sword will enable you to reach your lover's throat. When his agony becomes too terrible he will plead with you to kill him. You love him! One little stroke of that hungry blade and his importunity, together with his pain, will end—forever. You are brave, both of you? We shall see!"

He settled to his knees at Thorne's feet and began fumbling with the catch of the cage wherein the rats moved restlessly, their beady eyes gleaming cruelly, their sharp white teeth snapping incessantly at the wires of their prison.

"It is exquisitely pleasant to entertain you thus," Green Eyes was exulting. "This would be heaven were Inspector Trailor here!"

Kathleen bit her lips to keep back a cry. The crook glanced up quickly. In the mirror behind Kathleen he glimpsed the tapestries at the far end of the room parting slowly to reveal the death-white face of Inspector Trailor.

"If Trailor were here," Green Eyes continued evenly as he worked with the cage, "my cup of happiness would be overflowing. He shall pay, too! He——"

"I'm here now!" Trailor roared, bursting into the room. "You won't get away this time!"

Like lightning the crook sprang to his feet, whirled around, hurled the cage of rats full into Trailor's face and darted across the room, drawing an automatic as he went. Recoiling from the blow, his face bleeding and partially blinded, Trailor fired twice at the fugitive. Green Eyes was about to disappear behind the chair that held Kathleen. His gun slipped from his fingers. He shrieked shrilly, grasped at the chair for

support, swayed drunkenly and settled to the floor, clutching and clawing at his chest. The reports of Trailor's revolver set pandemonium loose. There came scufflings, heavy thuds, curses, groans, the staccato of police whistles, and three shots in rapid succession. Then all became ominously still.

"I'm all right, Trailor," Thorne hastened to say. "Free Kathleen."

His hands shaking with eagerness and using his gun butt, Trailor smashed the locks that held his daughter prisoner. Then he freed Thorne and tore away the ropes that encircled him. The three stared down at Green Eyes, who lay huddled in a heap.

"We've rounded up the whole damn—the whole outfit, inspector," a plain-clothes man reported breathlessly. "We had to croak three of them. We got all but——" Then he saw Green Eyes. "We got them all, inspector," he ended.

"Call the wagon, Ben," Trailor ordered, "and hustle them all away from here."

"This isn't turning out the way I planned it," Green Eyes murmured in a voice so low that they could scarcely hear.

Not ungently Thorne lifted his head and settled him more comfortably. The crook tugged weakly at his hood.

"Take the hood off," Kathleen suggested. "He wants more air."

Thorne tore the hood away. Kathleen and Trailor and Thorne gasped in amazement. They were looking upon the face of a fair young girl, whose loosened hair was falling about her shoulders like a cascade of golden waters. Her eyes opened very slowly, as though they were tired, and they were blue. Thorne glanced at the hood and tossed it to Trailor. The eye-slits were covered with green mica. The girl stared up into their bewildered faces.

"I did my best to make them square things, daddy," she whispered. "I did my best to make them pay."

Her head fell forward upon her breast.

"I swore I'd get them," she continued with a great effort. "They sent you—up the river, daddy—to die. They killed you. They made—a madman—of Denver Dan. I promised—I swore—I'd get them. I'd get Trailor and Thorne. I swore I'd make—them suffer—as they made—poor old Denver suffer—as they made you suffer. I——"

"The Shadow's daughter!" Thorne exclaimed.

"The Shadow's kid!" Trailor breathed.

"I did my best," the dying girl sighed wearily, "to make them—pay—to—square——"

Then her voice drifted away into nothingness as she trembled violently and lay strangely still.

"The Shadow's daughter," croaked Trailor hoarsely, "trying to square things, and she came mighty near doing it, too. She was a clever kid, a chip of the old block, Thorne."

But David Thorne was not listening. He turned from the dead girl to Kathleen, who was now softly weeping, and gathered her into his arms.

SWALLOWS COINS IN CELL

VINCENT MASTLE, 28, of 200 West 109th street, arrested and charged with shooting his sister-in-law, Mrs. Goldie Mastle of 189th street and Grand Concourse, The Bronx, attempted to end his life in The Bronx county jail recently by swallowing the handle of a tablespoon and two twenty-five-cent pieces. When a keeper passed his cell probably a few minutes afterward, he heard groans and found that Mastle was choking. Either the spoon handle or one of the quarters had caught in his throat, but it was dislodged, and the only discomfort left was in the stomach.

Mastle was removed to Fordham Hospital by Dr. Leo, and his condition was serious. An operation was performed for removal of the articles from the stomach, but it was feared infection might set in. It was Mastle's second attempt at suicide.

Who Stole the Money?

By AN EX-DETECTIVE

ONE of the hardest things in detective life is for an officer to be obliged to report on family matters. No matter how long he has been in the business, or how fireproof he has become, the detective who can make a report which he knows will break up a family and bring wretchedness to half a dozen persons is a scarce article. That is, he will report to his chief verbally or by letter, and thus let the information get to those who hunger for it and yet dread to hear the truth. To face a husband when the horror of dishonor is upon him, to report to a wife that her husband long since ceased to love her, and that her only remedy is the scandal of a divorce suit, is a position no one in the service wants to fill a second time.

A fair share of the detective business of every city hinges upon family matters, and the work done seldom appears in print, or if the newspaper reporters get hold of the circumstances the particulars are kept away from them. For a long term of years my assignments as a detective connected with the force of one of our large cities were entirely of this character, and some of the incidents can be related without injury to any one's feelings. I did not associate with criminal detectives at all, and the majority of them did not know me by name.

One morning I was sent for by the chief to take up a new case, and when I entered his office I found a lady present. She was not over twenty-five years of age, handsome, educated and a society ornament. She was the second wife of a rich old wholesale merchant whom I will call Williams. They had been married about a year and a half, and it was said that it was a love match. She had come to headquarters in her own car in broad daylight to tell her story to the chief and seek the services of a detective.

I may tell you that I was prejudiced in her favor from the very first glance. She was one of those women whose every word is of interest, and whose every gesture has a touch of artlessness in it. And she could shed big tears, and catch little sobs, and put such a look into her brown eyes as would make even an old detective almost want to die for her. When her story had been simmered down it amounted to this: For some time past she had been missing jewelry and sums of money. A private detective had been employed, but had met with no success in discovering the thief. One robbery included a valuable diamond ring; another a pair of earrings; a third the sum of $400; a fourth the sum of $300. About ten days previous to her visit a package of $12,000 had been taken from her husband's desk, and at the same time she had missed a diamond brooch from her dressing case. One of the regular headquarters detectives had been working on this last steal for over a week, and was still at it, although he had thus far been unable to secure a clue.

It was not only natural that Mrs. Williams should be interested in the recovery of the property, but that her great interest should lead her to call at headquarters to consult with the chief. In fact, her husband was confined to his room by an attack of rheumatism, and, for all we knew to the contrary, it was by his advice that she came. It would appear sharper in me to say that I suspected something wrong from the very start, but honesty compels me to say that I didn't. When she had departed the chief said to me:

"This looks like a very simple case, and I

can't see why Taylor has not picked up some clues. The robberies have been perpetrated by some of the servants, and I'll give you a week to trap the guilty party."

I was at liberty to consult Taylor. The only servants who had access to the bedroom were the chambermaid and the butler. This last person had no right there, of course, but having the run of the house, he could slip into the room.

Taylor had suspected him, rather than the chambermaid, and had devoted his whole time to watching the man. Nothing but disappointments had turned up. The butler had the best of recommendations, was without vices of any sort, and a search of his effects had brought nothing to light which could implicate him. It was agreed that I should look out for the chambermaid, and I put in a week on the case to find out that she also had the best of recommendations, and that the probabilities were all in her favor.

If it was surely true that either of the servants had committed the robberies, it was likewise true that they had covered their tracks so well that we had no hope of making an arrest. I worked on the case three weeks, and then abandoned it. Mrs. Williams seemed much more disappointed than her husband over my failure, and she shed tears of vexation when informed that I was to drop the case, or at least cease active work.

I meant to keep the butler and chambermaid under surveillance for a time longer, but I could not promise that anything would come of it.

The third day after this Fate played a curious trick. I had dropped into a restaurant for a plate of oysters, and not caring to have comers and goers study my face I went upstairs to be served in one of the little rooms or stalls. I had devoured my oysters and drank my coffee when a lady and gentleman entered the next stall on the right, and it wasn't ten seconds before I recognized Mrs. Williams's voice. The man's identity I also soon established by his tones. He was a handsome chap named Raynor, known in all the clubs as a spendthrift, and reported to the police as a reckless gambler. The pair were scarcely seated in the stall when the lady said:

"Will, I can do no more for you. I have robbed myself, stolen from my husband, and perjured myself to the officers to help you out of your troubles. You are no sooner out of one mess than you bring another upon yourself."

"Softly, sister!" the man groaned. "I have always been kind to you. I have always been the best brother in the world. Give me a chance. I was horribly in debt. You have come to my aid, and God will bless you for it."

"Hush, Will! God cannot bless me for stealing from my husband to pay your gambling debts. Do you know the value of that package I gave you the night you threatened to commit suicide?"

"About $12,000, I believe, and it helped me out of three or four bad debts."

"And I thought it was only $200! I am afraid you are down to ruin."

"I am no worse than hundreds of others who are sowing their wild oats. Make a raise of a couple of thousand for me this week and I'll go to Europe and remain away until I can steady down."

"I cannot do it. I can't even raise $50."

"But you must. It's either Europe for me or a bullet through my head."

I walked in on the pair. A few words had made the case as plain as day. While it was "all in the family," as the saying is, and while there was no probability that the brother would be punished, I did not rest until he had been taken into Williams's presence and made to confess. The victim had no desire to resort to the courts, but he was a man of considerable temper, and his remarks were anything but complimentary. I left the house in company with the brother, and as we gained the walk he asked:

"Do you think the old man would shell out a couple of thousands for me?"

"You must be crazy," I replied.

"Then the game is up, and here's good-by to you!" he exclaimed, and before I could lift a hand he had pulled a pistol and sent a bullet into his head.

Trapped!

By LLOYD LONERGAN

THE room itself was drearily commonplace—a "parlor" of the kind that went out of style years ago. The furnishings included a horse-hair sofa, a number of stiff, uncomfortable chairs, and an open grate, in which an immense log was cheerily blazing. Hideous crayon portraits and smeary "water colors," together with a silk-thread-worked-"God-Bless-Our Home" motto ornamented, or rather disfigured, the walls. Finally there were two glass-front bookcases filled almost exclusively with the works of Dickens, Thackeray, and other authors of a bygone day.

A picture of middle-class respectability, a flash back to the early 80's—except for the presence of the two men.

One, white of hair and primly dressed, was seated at the side of a mahogany table nearest the bay window that looked out toward the street, sipping a drink from a tall glass, with every sign of deep enjoyment. The other, in his twenties and stylishly attired, sat in a chair opposite watching, his eyes expressing the hatred he could not make clear in words.

For there was a gag in his mouth, and he was lashed securely to his chair by two strong ropes. The elder man smiled faintly, smacked his lips appreciatively as he carefully placed the empty glass on the table, daintily wiped his lips with a handkerchief, relaxed into his chair with a sigh of contentment, after which he addressed his companion. There was no evidence of animosity in his tone, rather one of sadness and reproof.

"Richard Colton," he said, "I summoned you here to-night to make a last appeal, to endeavor to make you understand that your marriage to my ward, Bess Renwick, cannot be permitted. But you laughed at my arguments, defied me, swearing that the ceremony would take place at noon to-morrow, the appointed hour. Firmly convinced as I am that this wedding would be a crime, and realizing that my words were of no avail, I am reluctantly compelled to adopt measures the world would call unlawful, although I do not so regard them under the exceptional circumstances that now exist.

"You are twenty-three years old, Colton, powerfully built, and a trained athlete. I am past sixty, feeble, and in no way to cope with you physically—except by a trick. That is why I doped the drink you took a while ago. It gave me a chance to tie you up, so you would be unable to interfere with my purpose when you understood how vitally it would affect you.

"The parents of Bess died when she was a baby, and I have handled her financial affairs ever since. When she told me she was in love with you it was naturally my duty, as her guardian, to have your life investigated. Frankly, what I learned did not please me. You are an adventurer, a fortune hunter; there are many sordid episodes in your life that you hope to keep hidden. Bess has implicit trust in you, and her aunt, with whom she lives, is a person of no firmness whatsoever. She cannot control Bess, is even loath to 'take sides,' as she puts it.

"But the very helplessness of these women places an additional responsibility upon me. Up to date my efforts have met with failure. Knowing that the women would believe anything you might say, you have brazenly denied my charge, jeered at my entreaties, and defied me. Affairs seemed

hopeless until I got an idea, virtually at the eleventh hour. That is why I tricked you into coming here to-night."

He reached in his pocket, pulled out a wallet, and dropped it on the table.

"In this," he explained, "is a passport, made out in another name, but with a description that will fit you, and a first-cabin ticket on the *Calonia,* which sails at midnight; also $2,000 in cash. I had intended to offer these valuables to you, but changed my mind, and did not dare to allude to it earlier in the evening, when I found you so obstinate. Do you want the opportunity to accept them now?"

His victim glared at him helplessly.

"Just as I feared, you refuse," sighed the elder man. "Well, then, unpleasant as it may be, I suppose I will be forced to proceed to extremes. Understand this, Colton, and make allowances for me if you can, but my one interest in life is the happiness of my ward. I could kill you, of course, but she would always cherish your memory and refrain from accepting the attentions of some more worthy man when he came along. So I have decided to destroy not only your life, but your reputation. This is most unpleasant, but then you have brought it upon yourself."

He fumbled in his pocket again and produced a slip of white paper.

"A prescription from my doctor," he announced. "I went to see him this afternoon, and he said—well, he told me he could do nothing, as I would not live six months. This medicine is simply to deaden the pain. And it was when I heard my physician's verdict that my present plan came to me.

"To save Bess from years of sorrow I will give up a few months of my life. In other words, *I* will die to-night, and *you* will be executed as my murderer. Listen carefully, and I am sure you'll agree that I have trapped you; trapped you beyond the power to escape."

"It is my intention to call up the police in a few minutes," he went on, "accuse you of having attacked me, and arrange things so that when my body is found no one will be in a position to disprove the charge that you are my murderer. The weapon I mean to use is your own revolver; I stole it from your rooms this afternoon. You will admit that it can be easily identified, this trophy from the Athletic Club awarded to you last June and suitably engraved. Well, I believe I have satisfied your natural curiosity, and it is now time for the next act in our little comedy drama."

A telephone instrument was on the table in front of the speaker. He picked off the receiver and started to talk, his voice gasping, weak, but with the whispered tones of extreme caution.

"Hullo—police headquarters — life and death—hurry!" Waiting for the connection to be made, he groaned as though in pain, but looked toward Colton with a smile as he did so, then resumed his story. "Denton Waring talking—63 Ellison avenue—shot by Richard Colton—his fiancée is my ward —I exposed him—he attacked—then tied me up—searching house now for papers I foolishly spoke about—I cut ropes—with paper knife—he thinks me dead, but may come back, so hurry. Oh! I am dying, I think. Help! help! I can hear him in the hall." With a sudden jerk he broke the cord, threw down the now useless instrument, and turned to Colton.

"I figure it will take the police fifteen minutes to get here," he said. "Mighty glad your revolver is equipped with a silencer," he continued, taking the weapon from his pocket and balancing it in his hand. "This will enable me to delay matters until my avengers are nearly here. You are a resourceful devil, Colton, and I can't allow you time to cover things up. The police will come by auto, of course, and from the front window I'll be able to see them when they turn into the drive. Then, and not before, I will stage the final act of the drama."

He glanced out of the window, then turned to his captive, and shook his head sadly.

"You haven't a chance in the world, old man," he declared; "I have thought up every little thing, and fixed it so it will turn to my advantage. These ropes now." He touched Colton's bonds. "When you tell the detectives that I bound you up and show

them the cords, what will they say? Why, that this was the rope that was used on *me;* you remember I explained that to them over the phone. And then perhaps you will say you were drugged. There isn't a drop of the drug in the house now. And your glass. I rinsed that out while you were unconscious. Nothing but good straight liquor in it now. Yes, my boy, I'll save Bess by sending you to the electric chair."

There was a few minutes of silence, the bound man struggling vainly, the other gazing calmly out of the window. The house was located in a lonely section of the city, and very little traffic passed that way. Waring stood at his post for a while, patient and watchful. Finally as an auto horn rasped out its warning, he pressed closer to the pane, his gaze gradually becoming intent. With a sigh of relief he again faced his prisoner.

"Our men at last. Car's turning into the drive now," he said. "Seems in a hurry. I'll have to work fast." He stepped behind Colton and removed the gag. "Shout if you want to," he remarked. "By the way, I mean to give myself two wounds, one through the leg, which will explain my helplessness, the other through the heart. The detectives are sure to figure that the first was inflicted *before* I telephoned, the second after you came back and found me at the wire. Just see if I haven't summed up their deductions correctly. Good-by."

Swiftly he cut the ropes that bound Colton's chest and arms, upset the man and the chair upon which he sat, rushed to the other side of the table, fired two shots swiftly, and collapsed upon the floor, just as the auto could be heard coming to a halt outside.

Colton, pinned down by the chair for a moment, rose to his feet trembling. As he did so there was a loud ring at the front door bell.

The trapped man's glances roved about hopelessly. Waring's plan had been too well devised. Colton knew his own bizarre story would never be believed. He was aware that he himself would have laughed it to scorn had some other man been the narrator. The electric bell sounded again, short sharp taps that denoted growing impatience. Then there were gruff calls and the sound of fists being beaten upon the door.

Colton was alone in the house. Waring's servants did not "live in," so the bell would not be answered. It was only a momentary respite, for in a little while, of course, the police would break down the door, find Colton, utterly disbelieve his story, drag him through the streets like a felon, land him in jail, headed for the electric chair. There was no possibility whatsoever of proving his innocence!

But there *was* time to escape if he did not delay. While the police were gathered at the front door he could slip out the back way. His glance fell on the table—and the wallet. A passport, ticket to Europe, money, and the boat sailed at midnight. It was now only nine o'clock. He grabbed up the wallet with sudden determination, stuffed it in his pocket, slipped out into the hallway, went on tiptoes toward the back stairs, and down them as silently as possible.

All through this the knocking had been repeated. A minute or so after Colton's stealthy departure a shrill whistle came from the inside of the house. Immediately thereafter the knocking ceased and the front door creaked as it was swung back on its hinges. Then there was the sound of footsteps in the hall, and almost immediately thereafter a man entered the "parlor."

Although Waring was lying on the floor, almost at his feet, the intruder paid no attention to him. Instead he scouted about the apartment, looking behind curtains, thoroughly satisfying himself that he and the old man were the only persons in the place. At last he completed his inspection, sank into a chair, took a cigar from his pocket, and started to light it.

"Coast clear, Waring," he said cheerily. "I've got to hand it to you. The game certainly worked all right."

The "dead man" rose leisurely, smiled a satisfied smile, and took his former seat at the table.

"It went off like a stage rehearsal, Logan," he assented. "Colton was scared to death. Hasn't any doubt in the world but that I killed myself because I thought he

was a crook and selected the only way possible to save dear little Bess. He even took the money I so carelessly left on the table, and will sail to-night on the *Calonia* as Wallace Ormond."

"I was a little bit afraid he might get wise to the fake telephoning," said Logan with a relieved air. "That was one detail that worried me a lot."

"Not a chance in the world," was the confident retort. "My back was to him and he couldn't see that I was holding down the arm of the receiver. The snag I feared was the shooting, but the 'police' arrived so snappily that he had no chance to investigate them. If he had taken a peep I think the beef blood I provided would have convinced him, but he didn't even waste time to look. Now, about your part. Is it all clear to you?"

"Sure," responded Logan, "I'm to be Colton's cabin mate. That gives me a chance to chum with him. He's never seen me in his life, so far as I know, and even if he has, it doesn't matter, as I am booked under my right name. Well, we will get acquainted. I'll treat him as 'Ormond,' of course, knowing nothing about any Coltons. The second day out I get a wireless, and I'll show it to 'Ormond' and anybody else I'm pals with and beef about it. Message simply says 'Denton Waring killed. Return at once.' I'll explain that Waring is my broker and it's important to see that his executors do not tangle up my securities. Rather rough on me to have to call a halt on my first real vacation. Of course I don't know any of the details. Maybe I'll say you were always riding too fast in autos, and I suppose that's how you came to grief. The one point to get over is that you are dead. Colton will fill in the rest of it. He'll be sure the police are looking for him and will keep on the move, even though there is nothing about the 'tragedy' in the papers. He steps out of the picture all right, all right."

"It was only dire necessity that drove me to take this course," remarked Waring sadly. "Personally I am very sorry for Colton, sincerely sorry. He's really a fine young fellow, and I don't blame him for indignantly denying the charges I trumped up against him. It's all the fault of that confounded will. The Renwick money goes to Bess on her twenty-fifth birthday, or on her wedding day, if she marries earlier than that. The girl is twenty now, and if she'd only stay single a while I would have plenty of time to straighten things out. Couldn't square up to-day, with the market in the condition it is, and having practically no time to adjust things. But in a year or two I'll be on Easy Street, and it will take that length of time for the poor girl's heart to mend."

"Guess I'll move toward the boat," said Logan, after a glance at his watch. "Will tranship on the way over, if possible; if not you can expect me back in a couple of weeks. Good-by, you resourceful old partner." And with a wave of his hand he departed.

Waring, left alone, mixed himself a fresh drink and thoughtfully reviewed the situation. Bess Renwick's love affair *had* made things difficult for him. He had been able to fool the girl, who regarded him as a man of integrity, but this keen-eyed young Colton was a different proposition. Colton was level-headed despite his youth. He would expect and demand a proper accounting of the Renwick fortune.

Legally Waring was an embezzler. Personally he regarded himself as "an unfortunate business man." Unable to swing certain deals himself, he had "borrowed" from the trust fund in his care. At the present moment he was financially in a precarious condition, but, like all speculators, he was firmly convinced that his bad luck was bound to turn. All he needed was time and a free hand. Time was essential if he was to retain his business standing and his liberty.

He argued himself into a frame of mind where he was actually convinced that he was doing the best thing possible under the circumstances. Half of Miss Renwick's money would be lost if an immediate accounting was forced upon him. But with time and luck breaking his way, as it was *bound* to do, he would be able to replace the

"borrowed" money and have a snug little fortune for himself in addition.

Logan would see that Colton kept on the move. "Smiling Sam" Logan was Waring's partner in several risky deals that were now costly losses, but bound to turn into glorious bonanzas. Logan had brains and a persuasive tongue. Yes, that end of the case would be handled as well as the serio-comic scene that had been played in the room where he was now sitting.

Perhaps Colton would come back some day. Well, all Waring asked was that he remain in hiding for six months. By that time the deficit would be covered. No one would believe Colton's story. Waring would deny it as a melodramatic nightmare.

It had been a nerve-racking day for the trickster, and he was completely tired out. After a while he nodded, his body relaxed, his head fell back, and in a short time he was asleep, calmly and peacefully slumbering, although he had wrecked the happiness of two innocent young people and sent one of them to wander about the world, a friendless, almost penniless fugitive. But Waring did not feel even one pang of remorse.

There were three men in the room when he awoke. And as he straightened up and rubbed his eyes they burst into peals of laughter. Two of them were strangers, but Waring remembered the third—Police Captain Warner of the near-by station.

"Guess the joke is on us, all right, Mr. Waring," said the captain. "Me and Riley and Carmody, my detectives here, did a Marathon to see your dead body, and now find you looking like a two-year-old."

Waring gasped, tried to say something, but failed.

"I don't wonder it shocks you, captain," Warner went on. "Honest, I don't know what kind of a bug we have down at the station. He says you committed suicide so you could send him to the electric chair. Do you know, I believed you were dead and that this guy Colton had killed you and was trying to frame a new kind of alibi. And Riley and Carmody agreed with me. Didn't you, boys?"

"Sure," chorused the detectives.

"But how did you happen to arrest Colton?" queried Waring. "What made you suspect——"

"It isn't our fault," remarked the captain quizzically. "This Colton, it seems, first sprung his hop dream on a Miss Fenwick after nine o'clock this evening. Told her he had come to bid her a last farewell, as he had been framed for murder—your murder. He was all set to disappear—had steamer tickets and everything—but the girl couldn't see it that way. Colton had their license; it seems they were to have been married the next day, so the girl dragged him around to a minister's house, and they were hitched, after which she led him to the station. Says she is worth lots of money and will spend every cent if necessary to clear him. He didn't want to do any of those things, but the girl ran the show. After we listened to them we come up here for the body and discovered the whole thing is a joke or a dope dream—darned if I know which."

"Neither do I," assented Waring blankly.

"Well, I guess it's up to me to toddle back to the station and turn this guy loose," declared the captain. "Want to come along? 'Tisn't necessary, of course, and it's rather late, nearly two o'clock."

"Yes, it *is* late," assented Waring. "Very late for an old man like me. I'll go to bed, I think. Good-night."

"Good-night," Warner returned. "Pleasant dreams, Mr. Waring." The detectives mumbled a few words, and the police contingent departed. After they had gone the trickster sank into the chair and covered his face with his hands.

The "beautiful scheme" had gone wrong. A woman, hardly more than a girl, had defeated him. Never for a moment had he contemplated that Colton would surrender to the authorities, and it was only Bess Renwick who made him do so. Now black disaster had come. He would be called upon for an accounting of his guardianship, probably in the morning, and the morning was only a few hours away.

So Waring, seeing that only in flight was there even possible safety, slipped up to his room and hastily packed a suit case.

The Cave of Death

A REMARKABLE discovery was made a few miles from Colorado Springs some time ago. Two young men, while rambling through the mountains, discovered in the side of a great ledge of rocks an opening, which, upon investigation, proved to be the entrance to a cavern of unknown dimensions. The first room was some thirty feet in diameter, circular in form, with a dome-shaped roof of solid rock. This room was entirely empty, except for the leaves and dust that had accumulated in the course of time. A narrow hall or corridor led out from the farther end in a southwesterly direction, but as it was dark within and night was approaching they did not push their explorations any farther at the time. Thinking they had perhaps discovered a cavern similar to the Grand Caverns, or the Cave of the Winds, near the Manitou Springs, they returned to the city and secretly made all the necessary preparations for a return visit the following day.

The next morning found them at the mouth of the cavern with a complete outfit of lanterns, hatchets, a pickax, etc., including lunch. Not knowing the extent of the cavern or whither its passage might lead them, they first fastened the end of a ball of strong cord at the entrance to the corridor, to be unwound and carried along as they proceeded on the way. The floor of the corridor was solid rock and covered with the dust of centuries. It was wide enough for two to walk abreast, with a decline of about one foot in ten, and estimated to be some eighty feet in length. It ended in a large oblong chamber, where they met with a pleasant surprise. From overhead the most brilliant stalactites depended, while from the floor arose a number of huge stalagmites, ranging from eight to fourteen feet high, and white as the virgin snow. The walls also reflected back the light like burnished silver. They found this chamber to be nearly one hundred feet in length, about seventy in width, and, as near as they could guess, twenty-five feet high.

At the farther extremity they discovered a niche, or cavity, cut in the solid wall, forming a seat four feet in length, which looked like the work of human hands. Several passages led off in various directions, but only one of them extended any great distance. Into this they crept cautiously, finding it barely wide enough for one to walk comfortably, and after what seemed an interminable length it ended in another chamber, of such a gloomy, forbidding aspect that they hesitated to enter. It presented a striking contrast to the one they had left a short while before. The walls, the roof and the floor were of a solid, intense, deadly black. The lanterns threw their rays but a few feet in any direction, and the darkness seemed as if it could be felt. A tour of this chamber developed the fact that it was the largest of the three. The floor was smooth and level, free from dust and intensely black. From this chamber, as from the other, a number of corridors radiated in various directions, several of them ending in small rooms varying in size, the largest being about ten feet square.

They had now made a circuit of the room, and striking across toward the centre, they were surprised to find the first positive evidence of previous occupation. In the centre stood a pyramid built of heavy stones, and rising in steps on all sides until it reached at least a height of eight feet. It was about ten feet square at the base, and the last stone on top measured twenty-eight inches each way. Each layer of stone forming the pyramid was in one solid piece, all of the same sable hue that characterized the walls and floor. Mounted on top of the last stone

stood one of the most hideous, frightful-looking images that the human mind could conceive.

Descending the steps on the same side they had gone up, and turning to go around the pyramid, a still more startling object met their view. There, lying close to the base, was the skeleton of what had once been a man of almost gigantic proportions. Around the waist was a heavy iron band, securely riveted together, and to this was fastened one end of a brass chain of peculiar workmanship about six feet in length, the remaining end firmly imbedded in the solid base rock. The skeleton was in an excellent state of preservation.

Every portion of it except the teeth had turned jet black. The teeth were white, presenting a singular and not at all pleasant appearance. On the opposite side of the pyramid another skeleton of smaller proportions, evidently that of a female, was found chained in the same manner. At the foot of the pyramid, in the middle of one side, a small spring of ice-cold water bubbled up, discharging its surplus through a niche into a crevice in the floor. The victims had evidently been chained within sight and hearing of the rippling water, but out of reach and left to die of starvation or thirst, or both.

A more careful search of the smaller apartments connected with this chamber resulted in the discovery of a quantity of relics that would have delighted the heart of the antiquarian. There were guns, axes of both iron and stone, hatchets, knives, a couple of broadswords, or simitars, of peculiar pattern, bows and arrows, spears and spearheads, and vessels of strange shape and material.

But perhaps the most interesting find was a smooth stone slab or tablet, four feet long and twenty-six inches wide, two and one-half inches thick. The upper third of this tablet was covered with strange hieroglyphics, and the lower two-thirds with letters in an unknown language all neatly chiseled in the solid rock. The only intelligible characters on the stone were the Roman numerals MDCLXIII. cut in ancient style on the lower lefthand corner.

BEATEN BY BURGLAR

A BURGLAR who got into the home of Lee Greenfield, a well-to-do dress manufacturer, the other day, beat his father-in-law Leopold Klein, 90 years old, into unconsciousness and then robbed the house. The police say the assault was so unnecessary and brutal that it was probably the work of an amateur, of whom they have a good description.

Mr. Klein was alone in the house, his daughter, Mrs. Greenfield, and Mrs. Klein having gone to a funeral in the afternoon. He was sitting in his room reading when he heard the telephone ring in the hall downstairs and went to answer it. As he approached the telephone he saw a man standing at one side of the hall, and as he picked up the telephone the man stepped up behind him and hit him with an iron pipe. Mr. Klein fell to the floor, and the man stooped over him.

"Don't hit me again; I am an old man," begged Mr. Klein, but the young thug hit him twice more and then dragged him to a little closet and locked him in.

About half an hour later Mrs. Klein and Mrs. Greenfield returned and heard moans. They traced them to the closet and discovered Mr. Klein lying on the floor only partly conscious. Dr. Albert R. Fritz of 8622 Bay Parkway was called, and said that Mr. Klein had some severe contusions, but that he would probably recover if no infection set in.

Acting Captain of Detectives George Busby, with Detectives Lahey, Kramer and Henne, searched the house to learn how the burglar gained entrance, but without success. It was found that he had taken $57 from Mr. Klein's pocket, a necklace from a bureau drawer and most of the silverware.

My Brother's Keeper

By HAROLD P. MONTANYE

ONE more year and I will be as free as you are. I mean not only free physically, but free to go out and look any man in the eye, and that is a privilege that few people appreciate until it is taken away from them.

I think I've kept my nerve pretty well, everything considered. Five years in this place isn't exactly conducive to a sweet disposition, but I have schooled myself constantly against becoming sour on the world and the injustice of things in general.

Some "Dizzy Dick" down the tier from my cell is singing "Home, Sweet Home" between big gulping sobs. A "Dizzy Dick" is our slang for a drug fiend, which tempts me to add that we have a lot of cute pet names for things here in our "happy prison circle." As I remember it, the bird who wrote "Home, Sweet Home" was couped up in jail when he did it. I can vouch from personal experience that he had the right steer, anyway!

Well, here's the honest-to-God dope on my case, strike me dead if it isn't.

My home town is—but that doesn't make any difference. I'll just say some place in the Middle West. From the time I can remember our family—father, mother, Terry and myself—lived in a little white cottage on the estate of old Chauncey Carew, the town financier. Dad was the caretaker and general workman around the place.

The only thing that ever seriously marred our happiness was dad's occasional drinking of too much liquor. One thing that can be said of dad, he always did things well, even to getting drunk. But taking it all in all, we were a happy little, home-loving family, getting a lot of enjoyment out of life in a wholesome, quiet way.

Then Chauncey Carew shot and killed dad. I was twenty-two when that happened, and Terry was a black-eyed, appealing youngster of eighteen. We have always adored Terry, all of us, and I guess we always will, no matter what happens.

Dad had been on one of his week-long drinking spells. He had started drinking the Saturday before, and it was Thursday night that old Chauncey killed him, so you can understand that he was pretty well saturated with whisky by then. This is the way it happened:

We, of course, never did know just why dad, after looking at the fires in the Carew house, went upstairs. But the fact is, along about eleven o'clock—this is old Chauncey's story—Mr. Carew heard some one prowling around outside his window. He investigated a little, but it resulted in nothing, so he went back to bed. Then a little later he heard some one stealing down the corridor outside his bedroom door. He listened quietly, thinking perhaps he was nervous and imagining things, but in a minute or two his bedroom door creaked ever so little, as some one swung it slowly open. Carew reached for the pistol he always kept under his pillow without a sound. Then he could see a dim outline in the doorway.

"Who is there?" Mr. Carew suddenly called out.

"None of your damned business, you tight-fisted devil," came back at him as he sat up in bed. Along with the words came the roar of a shotgun from the doorway. Fortunately for Mr. Carew, the short distance prevented the shot from spreading much before it buried itself in the bedstead. He only got two or three pieces in his left arm and shoulder. Old Chauncey had some

nerve, too. He didn't cry for mercy, but quietly emptied three chambers of his pistol at the form before him. He heard a sucking gasp, and the figure crumpled to the floor. Mr. Carew waited a half-minute before he slid out of bed and over to the switch to turn the lights on.

There, on the floor, in a widening pool of blood, was my father. Mr. Carew was astonished beyond description and nearly frantic with regret until he stopped to figure out that if he hadn't shot dad he would probably have been killed himself. Then he wasn't very sorry! Be it said to his credit that he was everything a gentleman should be in the terrible misfortune. He was vindicated of all blame in the matter, which was only fair. He made amends to us in every way he knew how. We couldn't help liking and admiring him in spite of the cold fact that he had shot dad. One consolation we had was that he knew as well as we did that a more honest man never lived than dad when he was sober. It was just the old red liquor that has been the cause of so many horrible tragedies.

Dad's job was given to me. I studied landscape gardening and made Mr. Carew's home into quite a show place. He gave me two salary raises in the next two years.

Terry was in high school and doing wonderfully well. He played half-back on the football team and forward on the basketball team, was well up in his studies, and one of the most popular boys in school. The only thing that worried us was the crowd he was running around with. Mostly sons of rich men, they had too much money to spend, and did quite a little drinking and gambling in a small way. I gave Terry several talks in a sort of half-serious way. I didn't realize just what all this could lead to, until I found out that Terry had on two occasions borrowed money from Mr. Carew. If kids like that would only chum with some one older and more experienced and then listen to good advice, what a lot of trouble and anguish they would save themselves and every one else!

The third time Terry went to Mr. Carew for money I found out about it. He was under the influence of liquor when he tried to borrow it, and gave Mr. Carew some cock-and-bull story about wanting to put the money in some business venture with two other boys. Mr. Carew refused to loan him the money, and, according to what he told me, Terry was rather nasty about it.

Mr. Carew called me into his library the next day and told me all about it. Without intending to, he hurt my feelings pretty badly by saying that he was afraid Terry had the same taste for booze that ruined dad. Well, I went up in the air and said a lot of things I didn't mean or believe. Don't think I sided with Terry. I intended going after him strong about the whole thing, but it hurt like the devil to have old Carew rub it in about dad and then Terry.

Finally he said:

"Well, Raymond, as I see this thing, looking out for my own interests, I'm afraid I'll have to ask for your resignation and your house, if you feel that way about it. I truly hate to, my boy, but I can't have my life endangered again. You are pretty hot under the collar right now. Go out and think this thing over, then come back to morrow, and we'll have another talk."

I don't know just what I answered, but I was in quite a huff. I showed it when I walked from the room, nearly knocking down a maid who was coming in the door to announce a caller. She looked at me in amazement.

I hunted up Terry, and, believe me, I rubbed it into him without mercy. I told him I had lost my job and our home, and he knew as well as I did that the whole thing would about break mother's heart. Poor kid, he walked away from me with tears in his eyes, gulping down little sobs. No one ever loved a brother more than I loved Terry.

After thinking things over, as Mr. Carew asked me to, I could, of course, see the thing in the right light. I determined to go back to him the next morning with an apology and the money Terry had borrowed. I thought Terry had had his lesson and would stop his foolishness.

Terry didn't come home to dinner that night, but that didn't worry me any. I knew he probably hated to face mother and me.

I never mentioned a word of the affair to mother, but just kept it under my hat.

That night, when I was taking my last look around to see that everything was all right, the funniest feeling I've ever experienced drew me toward Mr. Carew's house. I threw off this feeling and started toward our cottage, but the light in Carew's library drew me back. I had a nervous, jumpy feeling all over. You know how I mean—sort of worrisome—and you can't place the reason. I determined to take another look at things. As I passed Mr. Carew's window I could see that it was wide open, something I had never seen before, so I went up on the porch and tiptoed over toward the window, making little or no noise.

The sight that met my gaze as I peeped around the corner of the window will stay in my memory with terrible vividness if I live to be a million years old. Across his favorite chair lay Mr. Carew. His body was sprawled out in an ugly posture, his legs straddled and his arms dragging. His face was a livid, bluish black, and I knew he had been choked into insensibility.

Terry stood before Mr. Carew's safe, bending over a money-box. He had evidently heard me, because his head was sort of cocked to one side, as though he were listening. It makes me shiver now to recall that scene.

I stepped through the window without an instant's hesitation, saying:

"Terry, in Heaven's name what have you done?"

My mind was in a panic, but I steadied myself some way, appearing as calm as I do this minute. I knew it was up to me to handle the situation.

I closed the window and pulled the shade down. Then I stealthily crossed the room, listening at the door for any sound from the hallway.

Terry, who had been standing with a dazed, puzzled expression on his face, started to speak. I silenced him with a quick little hiss that bore as much venom as the hiss of a rattler, for I heard some one walking along the hall outside the door. I was paralyzed with the fear that they were coming to the room. I actually believe my heart stopped beating until they had passed. Then I quickly tiptoed across the floor, grasping Terry by the shoulders and shaking him. He was so drunk that I had to slap his face several times, hard, too, before he recognized me. He seemed to be in a sort of stupor.

"Terry," I gasped, "quick, tell me! S-sh!" as the footsteps again sounded in the hall. They halted before the door. Some one knocked lightly on a panel. I took Terry's hand, and he clung to mine like a little baby as the knock sounded again, longer and more insistent. Terry was beginning to realize what a terrible thing he had done. His eyes fell on Mr. Carew's body, and he sank down on a couch with a little sob, burying his face in his hands. I pressed my hand against his mouth to stifle the sobs. Then I heard the footsteps turn and retreat down the hall. I knew it would be a matter of minutes before they were back again.

After that I knelt down beside the boy and said:

"Terry, you've got to help me. We've got to wipe out every possible clue. For God's sake, be a man. Think of mother!"

But he wouldn't raise his eyes. He was afraid to look at that body sprawled over the chair.

Rising, I went over to Mr. Carew and placed my hand over his heart. There was no sign of life. Next I took a small mirror from the wall and held it before his lips. No breath was coming from his lungs. I was savagely glad, because I knew that at least he would never tell who did it.

Finally I went over that room, fine-combing it from end to end for any clue Terry might have left, thoroughly rubbing off every object he might have touched to obliterate any fingerprints. Then I—ugh! it makes me shiver—wet a handkerchief from a vase and rubbed Mr. Carew's neck where Terry's fingermarks showed. I wasn't sure, but I thought perhaps the prints of his fingers might be left there. Mr. Carew's bulging eyes seemed to be boring through me as though asking a question. Panic and terror nearly overcame me, but my love for mother and Terry was stronger.

I quickly surveyed the room; there

seemed to be something I had forgotten, but to save my life I couldn't place it, and time was too valuable to wait guessing. I stuffed what money there was in the strong box into my pocket, wishing to leave every indication that the motive was robbery. Then I touched Terry on the shoulder. He looked up at me with a pitiful, tear-stained face as I patted him on the back and told him I would see him through, no matter what the cost, if he would promise that he would do as I told him.

He gave my hand a squeeze and said:

"I promise, Ray. You're the finest brother that God ever made."

The effects of the liquor he had been drinking were wearing off, leaving him shaken. I wanted to get him outside before he went to pieces. Taking his arm, I walked him across the room, taking care to keep his gaze away from that hideous-looking thing in the chair. Then I switched off the electric lights and threw open the window. We climbed out and got on the drive leading to our cottage without any one seeing us.

Mother was still up when we got down to the cottage, so I just stuck my head in the door and told her Terry had come home and was going down to help me fix a leak in the duck pond. I had a plan pretty well worked out in my mind by that time.

We went up to the tool shed and got a crowbar, pick, chisel and a heavy iron sledge-hammer. Terry strode beside me without speaking, obeying my every word.

Going down to the duck pond on the farthest end of the estate, we both set to work knocking a hole in the cement dam. I took pains to do a lot of loud talking, and made Terry do the same thing. There were three houses up on the hill right behind where we were working, and I wanted the people in them to hear us and recognize our voices. I knew that would establish an alibi for us that would connect with the one mother could help us establish.

We worked like Trojans. Poor Terry suffered torments, but I wouldn't let him talk about the crime and tried to keep him from thinking about it. On the way back to the cottage I told him to simply say where he had been that night if he were asked and to declare that upon arriving at the Carew place he met me and we had repaired the dam. That was to be our story, and he promised to stick to it in spite of everything.

Well, to shorten my story, they found Mr. Carew just as we had left him. The newspapers had huge headlines. The police accepted the robbery theory without question until they cross-examined the maid, who had seen me leave Mr. Carew's library in a huff the day of the murder, and she told of the incident. The papers seized this information like vultures, and played up Mr. Carew's shooting dad, giving revenge, hatred and a hundred other reasons why I would kill Carew. They found no papers mentioning Terry's indebtedness to Mr. Carew, so he was left out of the thing entirely.

Remember that I had a mighty fine reputation in that town, and the police held off for some time before they even attempted to hang the thing on me. But the papers nagged them so unmercifully that finally they had to lock me up as a suspect. Mother nearly became insane with worry, and Terry, the little trump, was for going to the police and giving the whole story away. I've never seen any one change the way he did. From a rattle-brained, harem-scarem kid, he became a deep-thinking man overnight. His promise to me was the only thing that kept him from spilling the whole works.

I established an alibi, saying that I had spent the whole evening working on the duck pond, and mother substantiated my story. Terry's alibi was even better, as he had been with some friends until a few minutes before I found him in Mr. Carew's study that night. Then he had of course been with me, and mother substantiated this, so he was never suspected for a moment.

Then Terry pulled a "boner." Thinking he would help divert suspicion from me, he told of having seen some one skulking about the house as he came in that night. He told them he hadn't investigated, because he wasn't *sure* he saw anything. Of course the prosecuting attorney had him all tied up in knots in no time. They asked him if he could describe the person he saw and Terry

said yes! Well, they dragged in about two hundred bums and all sorts of men from day to day and lined them up for Terry to look over. After a while it got on his nerve. One day he picked out a sneaky-looking kid with a pair of furtive eyes, saying he thought he looked a little like the man he had seen. Terry's idea was to get away from that daily examination. He thought of course that this fellow would be able to establish an alibi and would be released immediately. And the queer part of it all is that they were about ready to liberate me when Terry pulled this error.

They put the kid in the next cell to mine, and I could hear his protests and sobs as they shoved him over in a corner. They gave us some supper and then turned out all of the lights except a bluish one in the corridor. All I could hear in the darkness was a dry sucking sob from that kid in the next cell every few minutes. After a while he began a stifled, incoherent mumbling, and began pacing his cell. I think between us we must have walked a thousand miles that night.

I couldn't sleep. His hysterical sobs began to get me after a while. I found myself pacing quickly back and forth and repressing little fast breaths that seemed to choke me. Finally I fell asleep from sheer nervous exhaustion. I dreamed of third degrees; monsters and demons trampling young boys, and I awoke in a cold perspiration. Then I began to pace my prison again. It was driving me insane.

Suddenly the boy in the next cell screamed:

"Oh, my God, I didn't do it, I didn't do it! They're going to railroad me." And his voice trailed off to a sob.

I rattled my iron-barred door and shouted for the guard. He came running, and I demanded the warden. I couldn't stand it any longer, knowing how innocent that kid was. They came with a court stenographer and took down my statement, which I signed. I swore that the boy in the next cell had nothing to do with Mr. Carew's murder. That was all I would say. They put me through a grueling that nearly broke me, but I wouldn't say another word. But that was enough for the prosecution. They let the boy go and entered a first-degree indictment against me. Terry pleaded with me to let him confess, but I held him to his promise. I was sure that mother knew I didn't do it and it would have killed her if she thought Terry did. I made my brother see my side of the thing, and I admire him more because the course he had to take was the hardest of the two.

The father of one of Terry's high school friends took my case. He was the best lawyer in that part of the state. It was only through my brother's friends that I wasn't convicted of second-degree murder and life imprisonment.

However, I got ten years in the state's prison!

Terry swore that he would devote every minute of that ten years to making mother happy and taking care of her. And be it said to his credit that he did it better than I could have done.

I have been here now for five long years. Each one has cut a furrow deep in my heart and soul that no man can erase. I don't want to make this a sob story. Mr. Waldron, my lawyer, Terry and a number of his friends have worked tirelessly to get me out, and I may get a pardon most any day.

Oh! but here is the joker that cost me six years of my life and this stain on my name. The boy who sobbed his heart out in the next cell to mine was an actor the prosecuting attorney planted there to wring a confession from me!

Locks Don't Bother Him

ONE night John P. Campbell, an editor, was awakened by hearing some one stumble in his room. He sprang to his feet, revolver in hand, and confronted the intruder, inquiring his business. The man very coolly said:

"I was just passing the house, and, being out of money, thought I would come in and see if I could find some. As I was going away with this little bundle which I had gathered I tripped on this rug and awakened you. I am very sorry indeed that I disturbed your rest."

"Well, you are a cool one!" ejaculated Campbell. "I guess you had better stand where you are for a few minutes until I dress, and I will take you down to the sheriff."

"You are very kind, indeed, to go to so much trouble for a stranger. I will be very glad to make the sheriff's acquaintance," politely responded the burglar.

Campbell escorted his prisoner to the jail, where he turned him over to Sheriff Sterling, telling him that the man was probably insane. He was placed in a cell, and next morning he was taken before Justice J. W. Miller, where he gave the name of Henry Carton. He waived examination and was returned to jail, in default of $1,000 bail, to await the action of the grand jury at the January term of the circuit court.

The jail at Clay Centre is a two-story brick and stone building, with latest improvements in steel cells and grating, and is considered the strongest in the State. About noon on the day of commitment Carton sent for Attorney F. P. Harkness to come to the jail to talk about the case and define the line of defense. When Harkness went to the cell, Carton had not a word to say about his case, but confined his conversation to scientific and literary subjects. He appeared to be an exceedingly well-read man, and surprised Harkness by his erudition. After consuming an hour in this talk, Mr. Harkness became impatient and asked Carton to speak of his case.

"You play billiards, don't you?" was the surprising reply.

"Yes; why?"

"Well, I will meet you at that billiard hall across the way at 8 o'clock this evening, and while we play we can talk about my case."

"But the sheriff won't let you go out to play billiards. You must remember you are in jail."

"That's all right. You meet me there at 8 o'clock this evening," answered Carton.

Harkness was convinced his client was insane, but his manner was so earnest and cool that when evening came on he could not resist the temptation to go to the billiard hall. Promptly at 8 o'clock the door opened and in walked Carton, whose entrance created no surprise to any one except Harkness, for there were only a few in town that were aware of a new prisoner being in jail. He went directly up to Harkness, and the two men began a game of billiards. While the game was in progress Sheriff Sterling entered the place. He did not recognize his prisoner, but Harkness, who was now completely nonplused, called to him and said:

"Look here, Sterling, is it your usual custom to allow your prisoners to be out playing billiards at this hour of the night?"

"What do you mean?" asked the sheriff.

"Why, I mean that this man Carton was committed to jail this morning to await the action of the grand jury, and now he is here playing billiards in the evening."

Sterling turned pale from the shock and fear that there had been a jail break.

"Don't get excited, old fellow," said Carton. "I only wanted to get a little fresh air, but if you object I will go back now."

The sheriff, the lawyer, and the burglar

crossed the street to the jail, where every door was found closed and locked, even the cell door being fast. To all inquiries as to how he got out Carton made no reply. He was replaced in the cell, and bidding his companions good-night prepared for bed.

Three or four days afterward Carton asked the sheriff if he could not take a walk around the town to get a little fresh air. Sterling laughed and told him that it was against the rules. Carton did not appear to be disappointed, but next morning when Sterling came from his apartments to the jail entrance he was astounded to see Carton quietly sitting on the steps smoking a cigar. On seeing the sheriff he arose and saluted him, telling him that he needed fresh air so badly that he concluded to take a walk before breakfast. He was locked up again by the sheriff, who was thoroughly alarmed at the fact that this man could at will pass through the walls, apparently, of the strongest jail in the State. Carton told him to give himself no uneasiness, as he liked his quarters too well to leave them until winter was over.

It now became a thing of frequent occurrence for the sheriff to find his prisoner sitting on the jail steps, and though he placed a watch on the man, he could never find how the escape was made.

During the latter part of November the lock on the vault of the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank became deranged, and the officials were compelled to undergo a temporary suspension until they could get some one to open the lock. All the locksmiths in the town and the bank experts of Kansas City tried their skill on the refractory door in vain, and the bankers were going to send to New York for an expert, when Carton told the sheriff to offer his services, as he thought he could open the vault. He had given Sterling such good reason to believe in his power that the sheriff had no hesitancy in telling the bankers that he had a man who could open their safe for them. Carton was escorted to the bank, and in the presence of the sheriff and the bank officials went to work. In half an hour he swung the door open, and then examined the lock and adjusted the part which had given the trouble. After receiving the thanks of the bankers he was taken to his cell.

When the district court convened the judge found a very large docket, and the result was that Carton's case had to be postponed until the August term. All spring and summer Carton took his regular nightly excursions, and the matter became so common that the sheriff began to lose his fear of an escape. One day, however, Carton's cell door was open, and the prisoner was not sitting on the jail steps. On a stand in the cell was a note to Sterling, thanking him for his kindness and stating that pressing business further West necessitated his hasty departure.

This was startling, but when Mr. John A. Moss, cashier of the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, opened his desk that morning he found a note from Carton stating that he had taken $200 from the safe in the vault to pay his traveling expenses, and that he considered this as a fair payment for his services in fixing the vault lock, for which he had never received pay.

Moss rushed to the vault, and in the safe on a pile of money found a receipt for $200, signed "Henry Carton." An examination showed that this was all that was taken from the thousands of dollars that were at hand. Not a clue has been found that would lead to the discovery of the man. Sheriff Sterling firmly believes that he has had charge of some supernatural being.

Just Within the Law

By JOE BURKE

CHAPTER ONE

TENSE and alert, a massive figure paused and listened intently at the mouth of a dark alley. Although the sound which caused him to halt so abruptly was barely audible, a sense of impending danger influenced him to take unusual precautions.

The time was shortly after midnight on a bleak, starless night in the late fall. The place was the foreboding, sinister underworld of Boston within the designated "dead line."

Detective Steve Cutler was the man with the colossal figure, who, with drawn service revolver in his right hand, his pocket flashlight in the other, rushed into the cavern-like place.

Hardly had the officer taken three steps, and the cloak of gloom had completely enveloped him, save for a narrow shaft of light which cast its penetrating gleam a few yards ahead, when the wicked spat of an automatic split the stillness. Missed! Again the roar, and a streak of flame stabbed the darkness. A hit, followed by a crash of glass, and the shaft of light was no more.

Then came a deadly silence. Like untamed beasts of the jungle, the hidden gunmen and the detective prowled with cat-like tread, both watching for a human target—to kill.

Cutler, his left hand hanging helpless at his side—for the gunman's bullet had shattered his wrist when the flashlight was demolished—was crouching behind a wooden barrel, which contained garbage from the squalid dwellers of the alley. A heavy step sounded on the paved sidewalk without, and a tall, helmeted figure, his symbol of office blinking in rhythm with his other shiny embellishments of buttons and belt buckles, stopped and peered within.

"Holdbrook," thought the detective, his teeth clamped together with pain. He could feel the warm blood as it trickled down his hand and hear the faint drip, drip on the filthy earth at his side.

A feeling of nausea was convulsing him. His eyes burned, and a giddiness was slowly overwhelming him. He licked his dry lips and opened his mouth to call to the policeman who was framed in the somber gray mouth of the alley. But the hail died at its birth. The human vultures might slay the officer before he could draw his gun. Then Patrolman Holdbrook turned and passed from view.

Thinking that the gunman and his followers had become alarmed and had withdrawn, and alarmed at his weakness, Cutler concluded to leave his cover and break for the street. There he could get word to headquarters and seek medical aid.

Spurred by the pain, he gingerly arose and took a step toward the light. An empty can, impelled by the toe of his heavy boot, went rolling before him with a tinkling, clamorous din. Men's snarls rhymed with the roar of guns. Bullets whined and spent themselves with a spat into the walls of the rookeries. The gangsters were out in force—out to kill the only man in the whole police department whom they feared. Several of the leaden pellets of death did not bury themselves into the rotten clapboards and one-hinged doors, but found their intended mark. One bullet entered the detective's throat just below the chin. In vain he tried to raise his service revolver, but it fell from his stiffening fingers to the ground. His

knees bent. He collapsed. Another standard-bearer of the public's army of protectors had answered the long roll. And facing the enemy, too.

There the police found him a few minutes later, and the reserves, notified by Patrolman Holdbrook, who had heard the fusillade, rushed to the scene with drawn revolvers. They were too late. The assassins had fled. They were soon hidden from prying eyes in some subterranean hide-out, bragging of their success.

At headquarters the next day gloom reigned supreme. The garments and effects of the slain officer were lying on the chief's desk. Steve Cutler had never married, so his body was resting in the chapel of a local undertaker awaiting burial.

Chief Taylor's florid face was set in deep lines as he fingered a heavy gold watch and chain, the property of his late subordinate. His handcuffs, twisters, short stick and service revolver were there. Those he touched reverentially, as though they were sacred. There were his penknife, keys and an open letter. The latter Chief Taylor raised to his eyes. The envelope was plain and the paper was of a high-grade texture. The dead detective's name and boarding-house address were typewritten on it. It also bore a two-cent stamp which had been duly canceled, showing that it had been through the mail.

The grizzly old department head also noted it was postmarked Boston and dated five days before. He was somewhat loath to examine the enclosed sheet of paper which he could see inside. But policemen are obliged to disregard fine scruples in their line of duty, and in a murder case nothing is exempt.

Slowly the chief drew forth the paper, unfolded it, and sprang erect with an oath as he read:

"CUTLER: We are warning you for the last time, so take heed if you want to keep on living. Lay off on the Ferry gang. If you were a wise guy there would be more kale in it for you than you can make in gum-shoeing. This is final. Your next message will be a knife or a bullet.

"THE MASTER MIND."

"God!" Taylor groaned, settling back into his chair again. The typewritten letter seemed to sear his eyeballs like a branding iron. "He knew he was marked for death and never told me."

Five minutes later the chief was in conference with every available member of his department. The typewritten letter, a mute herald of the cowardly crime, gave no clue to the author. Fingerprints were useless here. Paper? Bond of best quality, but thousands of sheets were used in business every minute all over the world. The type of the machine? He might trace the make, but there were thousands of those in use also.

"The bird who wrote that letter, boys," spoke the chief, "isn't one of the ordinary yeggs. He's crook enough—blast him—but he's the guy that furnishes the brains for his gang. This ward is so rotten with crooked politics that it polutes the very air we breathe. There's one snake who I'd like to get the goods on, so that I could have the pleasure of sweating him for an hour or so! I'd make him empty his filthy soul. You fellows know who I mean. Honest Martin Kelly. Honest—think of it, boys! That—that unhung crook desecrating the name of honor! Bah! Get out, boys, and see if you can pick up anything to convict Cutler's murderer."

CHAPTER TWO

IF "Honest" Martin Kelly's ears were burning from the roasting handed out by the chief, he surely displayed no outward symptoms of it as a newspaper was handed to him by a hotel attendant. A dollar tip, a smile, and a "thank you" were the bell-hop's reward.

"A swell gent," commented "buttons."

Martin Kelly was a power in politics in the old Ferry ward. That is to say, until the present generation, he carried every vote in his vest pocket. He could make or break men in public office. Police heads and court judges were appointed when approved of by him. They were "broke" when he disap-

proved. His amiable smile and ready charity won him the name of Honest Martin, the philanthropist. Indulgent mothers alluded to him, when schooling their sons, as a glowing example. A court session was never complete without his presence. He often pleaded for the liberty of some poor unfortunate who was a victim of circumstances, as he called it. He lived in a modest third-class hotel, the Stag, and the white lights saw little of him. Those poor "unfortunates" often called on him at his suite for aid. Men whose records covered both sides of the police index card were often his guests. The police noted their calls but shook their heads.

"Poor Martin had a tough job on his hands to put those birds straight, but he meant all right. We should worry," was the general comment.

He was a tall, spare man of fifty or thereabout. His body was not thin, but lean and muscular. His hair was white, snow-white, and there was an abundance of it. His face, always smoothly shaven, was kindly beyong measure. His eyes, a velvet gray. But as he scanned the flaring headlines of the *Morning Sun* his eyes grew fiery. Like the chameleon, they changed color, and his breath came in quick, jerky gasps.

With hands that shook slightly he carefully folded the paper and placed it in a drawer of a desk before which he was seated. Then he stood erect, turned and walked to the window. For several moments he gazed down on the streaming multitude below. How much like ants did the hurrying, scurrying populace seem to the watching man. Newsboys zigzagged in and out of the busy throng crying their papers. Now and then a shrill, piping voice wafted its reverberation up to the open window.

"Pipor! *Globe, Record* an' *Sun!* Full account of der moider! Buy de pipor an' read all about de killin' of Detective Cutler! Pipor——"

Although the day was warm, Martin closed the window with a deep frown and walked to his desk again.

"Some men believe in chance," he soliloquized, dropping into the swivel chair with a sigh. His philosophical mood spurred him on, and he added: "Some believe in Providence. Some, not always, believe in themselves. In their so-called courage they expect to overwhelm the inevitable. Those men are fools. Of this type was Stephen Cutler."

In the lee of a mountain which loomed up majestically like a silent sentinel stood a little cottage. Creepers and vines, now void of their embellishment of green, clung snake-like to the front of the humble abode. The garden, too, was shorn of its summer beauty. Winter was slowly receding before the warm breath of spring. Potage La Prairie would soon be basking in glowing sunshine, and stalwart trappers would rejoin their families, their pouches bulging with gold, the profit from their winter traps.

There was one man who was not hurrying home; he had remained home all winter. That was his duty. He was in the British king's service. This individual was one of the watchdogs of the six thousand or more inhabitants.

Sergeant Harry Cutler, who wore the chevrons of the Northwest Mounted Police, was a brother of the murdered Boston police detective. Like his late brother, he was unmarried, living at the post with his troopers. But, unlike his brother, he had a sweetheart. And two days following the grim tragedy, as was a daily event, he was seated on the doorstep of the cozy little cottage awaiting her appearance.

Nina LeSales was good to look at. The dusky olive skin which encompassed a pair of flashing black eyes, a pert nose, and her tempting mouth was suffused with a tinge of carmine. The Canadian girl's coal-black hair was combed back from her forehead and glistened like polished ebony. She loved the young non-com, whom she had known since his return from overseas, where he had been ever since the Canadian forces went forth to battle the Huns. Tiring of the "humstrum" life, as Cutler termed it, with the British forces, to which he was transferred at the cessation of hostilities six months before, he secured his dis-

charge and sailed for home. The Dominion's famous police force was his next venture, and in three months he was made a sergeant.

"Greeting, monsieur," hailed a flutelike voice behind the seated, red-coated figure.

"Ma chere," he said softly as he stood before Nina and looked down into her dancing eyes.

They were whispering to each other when a trooper from the post hove in sight, saluted, and handed the sergeant a letter.

"Just come in," he said briefly. Then, noting the French girl's pout, his mouth parted in a grin, and his eyes carried a teasing laugh. He, like Cutler, was a picture of youthful spirit and strength.

Sergeant Harry Cutler quickly tore open the letter and perused the contents. His eyes narrowed. His body stiffened. When he held the missive towards the girl to read his face was cold and gray as marble.

"Mon Dieu," she gasped, then let the letter fall from her fingers and flutter to the ground. "They keel your brother?"

"Yes, Nina," he answered sadly, "and I'm going to the States to find the murderers. I've fought hungry wolf packs in the great white waste, and I've battled the Hun on No-Man's-Land. But the prowling beasts that I'm going after now are bigger game. Crooks won't fight in the open, and yet the rattlesnakes will give warning before they strike. I'll return when my work is finished, then we'll call on our old friend, Father DeBoise, for the wedding. Good-by."

Without another word he embraced and tenderly kissed the weeping girl, sprang down the steps, and, with shoulders squared, chin erect, he hurried toward the post.

CHAPTER THREE

TWO days later a tall, well-knit, soldierly form was shown into Chief Taylor's private sanctum. The detective department's head greeted the trooper and waved him to a chair. Harry Cutler declined the proffered cigar, stating in a grim jest that he had swallowed smoke enough "over there."

"And the warning letter, chief," said Cutler, after Taylor had told the story of the killing, "may I look at it?"

"Sure," replied the chief readily.

Sergeant Cutler eagerly scanned the typewritten paper which the detective head passed over to him. His comely visage was a graven mask as he devoured the threatening words.

"May I take this with me, chief?"

"'Tain't regular, sergeant, but if you think it'll be of any use to you, it's yours."

"Thank you, sir," said Cutler, folding it and placing it in a leather billfold. He arose and warmly shook the chief's hand. "I'm going on a little hunt of my own, sir, and in my own way. Steve Cutler was my brother, and I loved him. He was my only living relative. I have your permission—for which I'm grateful—to avenge his murder. My methods may be a little different from those of your staff detectives, but we of the Mounted never fail to get the man—dead or alive. Do I make myself clear, sir?"

Taylor looked up from beneath his bushy eyebrows at the stalwart figure confronting him. Cutler met the searching glance unflinchingly. There was even a trace of defiance in his steely eyes.

"You win," surrendered the chief, "but keep within the law. Of course if you happen to pot one or two of them in self-defense—well, that's self-defence. Good luck."

Policeman Ted Holdbrook grasped his short club firmly, flattened himself against the poster-covered fence, and awaited the approach of the prowler. The night was dark. There was no moon. The sky was overcast and rain was in the air. The skulking figure was within two feet of the officer, when he stopped short and a revolver appeared, as if by magic, in his right hand.

Officer Holdbrook was no coward. Far from it. The move of the gunman nearly swept him off his feet. It was too late now to go after his service revolver, so he

stepped into the open and faced the armed man.

"Put up that gun," he ordered, his eyes fixed on the menacing weapon. "What's the big idea?"

The gunman snarled and glided up to the policeman. Ramming the gun into his midriff, he whispered:

"Steady, Holdbrook! Don't move! I'm Steve Cutler's brother. There's a bird about a half block in the rear who's been trailing me for the past twenty minutes. Pretend I've got you scared. Quick! Look!" The astounded officer glanced down at a shiny object in the palm of his left hand. A Boston police badge! "He's across the street now. Play it out."

Holdbrook grasped the whole meaning of it. The man confronting him, disguised as an habitué of the underworld, was Sergeant Harry Cutler. Policeman Holdbrook and every officer and detective in the city had been notified of his roving authority. Those pure steely eyes which looked straight into his own were credentials enough to prove his claim. How like the eyes of his slain brother! A slight prod from the pretended gunman's weapon aroused the policeman to his part in the tableau.

"Put that gat up," he ordered again, his voice faltering somewhat, carrying its faint tone across the street to the listener's ears. "Don't you see I'm a police officer? What did you think I was—a holdup man? Go on, now, or I run you in for toting a gun."

Policeman Holbrook turned on his heel and walked off.

Cutler's derisive laugh pealed out on the silent night as his firearm vanished from view. Vanished is the fitting phrase, for even the peering trailer did not discern the move. Cutler then crossed the street and headed south.

Hardly had he traveled two blocks when he was aware of the nearing footfalls of the crook who had been following him. He waited until he could almost feel the other's hot breath on the back of his neck, then he whirled like lightning, his revolver again boring into a human stomach.

"Claw fer de moon, feller," rasped Cutler, scowling into the pasty face of the startled crook. "What do youse tink yer doin', eh? Gonna stick up de Listener, was ya? Gee, dat's a good one. Ye cheap hophead, fer two pins I'd croak yer! What's de lay? Say somepin, or d——"

"Yo'—yo' ain't Listener Mullen?" interjected the other in a voice of mingled awe and admiration. "Gawd, Mr. Mullen, I didn't tink youse was alive. Red Shannon tol' me he read in de paper dat de Jerries bumped yo' off at Flanders. Gee, but I'm tickled ter meet youse, Listener! C'mon down ter Black Mike's an' meet de bunch. Red's blown out fer a few days—youse is hep?"

The supposed safe robber packed his gun as quickly as he had unlimbered it, and the admiring crook gasped, but held his peace. The officer was somewhat relieved to learn that Red Shannon was on a temporary sojourn. He had recently learned that he was the acknowledged gang-leader. The nocturnal lepers hated and feared him but murdered and pillaged at his command. He also had reason to know that the crook whom he was impersonating was well known to Shannon. But now that the gang-leader was hiding out, he felt sure that his dissimulation would not be discovered. Now was his chance to beard the crooks in their den, find the murderer, and avenge his brother's death.

"Red's got another tink comin'." Cutler leered knowingly. "De Huns found me wid a busted hoof an' put me in stir. I beaned a couple of de square-head screws an' beat it back to Paris. I cleaned out a dump in France an' they sent me t' de pen. Next I crushed out an' stowed away on a tramp, an' here I am—flat. What's your monniker, bo?"

"Dey calls me de Eel," informed the other proudly.

"A slippery guy, eh?" bantered the sergeant. "Lead me t' Black Mike's till I wind myself 'round a hooker o' shine an' some chow."

The Eel trotted off with a humped-up, slouching gait. The trooper non-com watched the puny form with aversion. The Rat would have been a more fitting sobriquet for the skulking figure, whose furtive

glances swept the ill-lit streets and byways as he scurried along in the direction of Black Mike's near-beer saloon.

There was a lifting of heads and a peering of narrowed eyes when the Eel and the counterfeit Listener entered the dingy, foreboding underground cellar which posed as a saloon, but was in reality a rendezvous for underworld vultures. The Eel nodded in answer to growls of greeting from several sinister-looking yeggs, but kept on going till he reached a door at the rear of the room. He pushed it open and entered. Cutler followed. The place where he found himself served as an office and private sanctum for the owner, who was seated at a desk, his broad back turned to the intruders.

"Hello, Mike," piped the Eel, closing the door and shutting out the hum of conversation and vivid oaths.

Black Mike swiveled around in his chair and scowled up at the pair.

He was a hard-looking individual. A mop of curly black hair topped the most repulsive evil-looking visage the Canadian policeman had ever looked upon, and that is saying a whole lot. A livid scar running from a bat-like ear to a corner of his thick-lipped mouth added to his facial repulsiveness.

He slowly raised his huge form out of the chair and stood towering over the diminutive crook.

"What d'ya mean by buttin' in here like dat?" he snarled. "Who's dis bird?"

"Easy, Mike," admonished the Eel. He never flinched even under the giant's menacing attitude. "Dis gent is a friend of Red's. Meet Listener Mullen of Noo York. He's——"

"Listener Mullen," Black Mike interjected with a venomous hiss. "He's a d—— liar! He's a——"

He gasped with mouth agape, the rest of the passage ending in a gurgle, for Cutler rushed straight at him.

The Eel picked himself up from beside an overturned chair where Cutler had hurled him when he sprang at the saloon owner. His gun was embedded in Mike's ponderous midriff, and Black Mike's face was a sickly yellow as he cringed under the pressure of the steady weapon. He, like all of his breed, was a spineless coward in the face of real danger.

"Yo' big stiff," hissed Cutler with seeming rage, "no one can call Listener Mullen a liar! Take dat back or I'll——"

"Sure—sure," gulped Black Mike, his eyes bulging, his knees buckling. "I—I didn't mean——"

"Ah, shut up," said the phony Listener in disgust, turning away. The Eel was at his side now, and again was a witness to the vanishing revolver.

"Whatcha tink now, Mike?" grinned the puny crook. His admiration for Cutler had reached its zenith. His contempt for Black Mike had dwindled to low ebb. "He's all jake an' de goods, too. Eh—what! Dig him up a sort o' shine and some chuck. Den see if Lefty an' Gypsy Dorr is out'n de other room. I tink I heard Lefty's voice. He musta come in."

CHAPTER FOUR

THE poisonous moonshine liquor which Black Mike served to the Canadian policeman a few minutes later was dexterously poured into a handy cuspidor. The food, being fairly good and well-cooked, Cutler ate a portion. He pushed aside his plate, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, then brought forth from an inner pocket the "makin's." A cigarette was neatly rolled and lit. Sergeant Cutler of the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police was lazily blowing smoke through his nostrils when the door opened and Black Mike strode inside, followed by two men.

Cutler peered at them through half-closed eyelids. They alike bored him with a searching look. Neither were in the Adonis class. Yegg symbols were plastered all over them. Both were nearly alike in height and weight, young—say between twenty-three and thirty—and their dilated pupils bespoke narcotic addicts.

The Eel went through the usual formality of introducing the masquerading safe rob-

ber to Lefty and Gypsy Dorr. Another round of drinks was served, but Cutler cleverly disposed of his share under the table. Then the Eel addressed the trio.

"De Listener here is flat. Savvy?" he began. "He's a friend o' Red's, an' dat says he's a friend o' ours, too. He's de goods an' can throw a smoke-wagon de quickest I ever saw, but he's in dutch wid de bulls, and he's gonna lay low till it blows over. Red tied up wid him in Philly before de big fuss wid de Jerries, an' brands him O.K. Dat write-up 'bout him being bumped off was all bunk. De Jerries had him in de pen. We'll pipe a lay fer him dat'll stake him wid some kale."

The Eel's oration, coupled with glances of admiration at his guest, terminated with a call for more drinks. Then the hypodermic needle was brought to light, and the three crooks treated themselves to a "shot."

"Use it?" proffered the Eel, laying his outfit on the table and rolling down his shirt sleeve.

"Naw," responded Cutler with apparent scorn. "Nix on dat dope stuff; I'm no hophead. I'm sorry Red's not here, as I tink I got a lay dat would put us all on Easy Street."

"Spill it," said the Eel. His eagerness to work in cahoots with the pseudo Listener was visibly manifested as he leaned across the table, his dope-primed body quivering.

"What's de use?" parried Sergeant Cutler, distorting his face with a supercilious leer; "youse guys couldn't nose in on dis lay. It's a inside job. I've gotta be planted in de dump as a flivver driver. Not a chance o' coppin' de swag by crackin' de crib, 'cause de owners got a flock o' wires and jinglers on de doors and windows."

"Who wised youse up, Listener?" asked the Eel.

"De guy dat got canned. I meets him over at de docks, pickled t' de ears. He was panhandling fer de price of a shot o' shine an' I stakes him two bits. Dat cleaned me. Den he weeps out his tale of woe."

Cutler rolled and lit another cigarette, puffed serenely, and watched the others through half-closed lids. He had concocted enough of a yarn to arouse their curiosity. He was gambling with death. Should anything betray him a silent stab in the back would send him to join his brother. He smoked on in silence.

"Spill de finish, Mullen," urged the Eel.

The phony yeggman flipped his cigarette butt across the room, spat after it, then resumed.

"De lit-up bird was a chauffeur fo' a swell guy in de Back Bay. He swipes a bottle o' booze from de cellar an' laps it all up. De boss gets hep an' turns him loose. He's sore, an' I wrings him dry. Ol' Moneybags has a sardine can fulla ice an' junk dat would sink a liner, an' smakers by de yard. Dat's de lay, an' I gotta get a letter of introduction to dat guy an' cop de job. Savvy?"

"Sure," acclaimed the Eel, "dat's gravy. Gee-wow, but dat'll be a haul! But how can Red get dat introduce paper?"

The bogus crook lowered an eyelid knowingly. The four pair of eyes met, crashed, and three pair deviated and dropped. The other pair winked owlishly.

"Has Honest Martin Kelly lost his drag?" came the startling question.

Silence predominated for a fleeting moment. The three crooks exchanged interrogative glances. Then the puny crook spoke.

"I don't get ya on dat Kelly stuff, Listener."

Sergeant Cutler sprang erect with a snarl. He towered over the seated crooks, whose hands moved slowly to their hip pockets.

"Can dat chatter," he snarled, baring his teeth; "it don't go wid de Listener! An' you rats put dem grub-snatchers o' yours on de table! Don't kid yourself dat youse can cop a sneak on me wid your gats; ye can't! Dat's right. Now listen, Eel."

He lowered himself into his chair again and glared at the trio across the table.

"Red tol' me all 'bout dat honest guy, an' he's de gent dat can put it over. You cheap hopheads give me a pain! I'm sick o' dis hedgin', so if you saps don't wanta loosen up I quit."

Cutler arose again and buttoned his coat. He kicked the chair back with a muttered

oath, and started for the door. His hand was on the knob when the Eel, speaking, arrested his seeming intention.

"C'mon an' sit down, Mullen." He arose and walked to the Canadian trooper's side. "Ferget it. You know we gotta be wise. Kell is de goods an' will play square if you make good. He'll take de ice and junk, so you are playin' safe both ways. One-quarter der value is his split. You get th' sheckels fo' de rest. Tell him de Eel sent yer, as I'm de boss while Red's layin' low."

He scribbled an address on a torn piece of soiled notepaper which he dug from an inner pocket and slid it across the table-top to the fraudulent yegg.

"Dat's his hang-out," he informed Cutler, "an' play de game right in front o' dem bellhops an' de ink-slinger. De down-an'-out stuff is what Kell wants us t' do. Savvy?"

Sergeant Cutler scanned the scrawl for an instant, then carelessly dropped it into his coat pocket. He pressed a bell on the wall, and the evil face of Black Mike appeared through the partly open door. The sergeant ordered a round of drinks, then the head was withdrawn.

"Eavesdropping," he mentally conjectured. Then aloud: "What kind o' fly dicks have dey in dis burg? Are dey all like dat harness flatty dat I stuck up t'night, Eel?"

He grinned, and the diminutive-acting gang-leader related the story of Policeman Holdbrook and the Listener's fake episode, which brought a laugh and sent Cutler's stock sky-high.

"Dat guy Holdbrook's a joke," grinned Lefty. "De headquarters dicks ain't any better. Dere was a plain-clothesy dat got croaked last week. He had us all on de jump. De fool was warned t' lay off, an' he wouldn't. Den Red got orders from Kell t'——"

Cutler was gripping the edge of the table with digits of steel as he peered at the speaker whom the Eel now silenced with a warning hiss. His heart hammered again at his ribs and his temples throbbed. The moonshine whisky was prying loose their tongues; soon they would be boasting of their atrocious deed. He was certain that he was in the presence of some of his brother's murderers, and the thought filled him with insensate, overwhelming rage to kill—to kill! But he quickly subdued his passion. The time was not ripe. He must learn more. He must be sure of his ground and just within the law of his dead brother's adopted country. And foremost of all, he must get them all—to the last man!

"Well, some o' dem bulls need bumpin' off," he baited. His voice rang strange even to his own ears. "I croaked one in Frisco dat was friskin' me fer a gat. What did de dick youse guys croaked do to Kell? Gettin' wise t' his phony goody-goody play?"

"Dat's de story, Mullen," bit the Eel.

(*To be continued in next week's issue*)

BANDITS ROB A BANK

THREE armed men, one of them masquerading as a woman, held up the First National Bank, Dyer, Ind., the other day and escaped with $5,000 after a battle with citizens, in which the bandit dressed as a woman was shot and had to be carried to a waiting automobile by his companions. It was the third time in three years that the bank had been robbed.

The first bandit, heavily veiled and wearing a woman's skirt and long coat, entered the bank shortly before closing time. He thrust a revolver into the face of William Gettler, the bookkeeper, who was alone, while his companions scooped the money from the safe into a satchel and retreated toward the street.

Gettler stepped on an alarm button and as the bandits returned to the street they were met by rifle fire. One of the first shots struck the bandit in woman's clothing. His companions picked him up, threw him into the rear seat of their automobile and sped away.

Confessions of a Publisher's Reader

FOR some years I was a reader of manuscripts for a noted New York publisher. I read the manuscripts first, and if approved passed them on to the one in command above me. If he approved of it, it was generally given to one of the members of the firm for final decision. One day I came upon a manuscript that was most vividly written.

It was a story of crime, and I knew at once that it would be a great success as a book. The price, however, that was marked upon it was almost prohibitively high; still, I considered it was my duty to at least give those above me the chance of acceptance or rejection. So I handed the story to the next man above me, whom I shall call Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown read the story and was as much interested in it as I was. He gave it to the member of the firm whom for convenience I may call Mr. Smith. When Mr. Smith started reading the story his door was open, but in a very short time the door was closed and locked, and nobody entered that room until the MS. was finished.

When it was done Mr. Smith came out to Mr. Brown, and it seemed to Brown that his face was ghastly pale. He said: "Write a check to this woman for her MS." Then, without a word, he went downstairs with the MS. in his hands and threw the copy into the furnace. He had paid an exorbitant price, although the story was by a well-known author, and he deliberately threw away all chances of returns. It turned out afterwards, as I found out, that this story was really the life of a friend of Mr. Smith's, and the motives of the crime, which had always been a mystery before, seemed so probable that the MS. almost read like a confession. It looked to me afterwards that, knowing the circumstances of the case, the MS. had been sent in to our particular publishing-house for a particular purpose, and that the price put on the MS. was simply so much blackmail, because, although the story was never published, we never had an inquiry as to why it had not been issued.

I one time got a short story from a lady in the South, with such a pathetic letter accompanying it that, although the story was the most utter nonsense, I thought I would show the letter to Mr. Smith. I took it in to him and he read it. He looked up and said: "What kind of a story is it?"

"The story," I said, "is perfectly useless."

"Well"—then he paused a moment—"how much would it make at your regular prices?"

"It would amount to sixty dollars," I said.

"Very well, draw this woman a check for sixty dollars and send it to her. She seems to be in great need. Then throw the story into the waste-basket."

I did this. About a month after we received a letter from the lady asking when the story was to be published. I wrote back and said we could not tell. Another few weeks passed, and we got another very impertinent letter demanding to know when we intended to print the story. I wrote back to her and said that the story belonged to us, and we would print it just exactly when we pleased. She said we were robbing her of her justly earned fame; that we were thieves and everything else of that kind, and this ended the correspondence, because, of course, we could not send the story back, as it had been destroyed. So much for mixing philanthropy and business.

There was a doctor who used to do a good deal of translating for us. He was a very versatile man, who spoke several languages fluently, and he received the principal European magazines and translated whatever was good in them, so that we had the translations at the earliest possible moment. One time he brought in a story which purported

to be a translation. After it was published some grubber in antiquarianism wrote in and said that was a very interesting story, but that it had not been improved by the person who stole it; that what changes had been made had been changes for the worse, and that if we wanted to see the story as it really ought to have been given, we were to look in the third volume of a certain magazine on such a page.

When Mr. Brown received this letter he became naturally very angry. He sent right down to the publishers and got the special number of the magazine mentioned, and there, sure enough, was the story, the only change being the change of names and phraseology, which, as the person said, was changed for the worse.

When the doctor next came in, Mr. Brown handed to him the open magazine, saying: "There, doctor, is a story that I think will interest you."

As the doctor read his face flushed. At last he said: "Have you a man here who reads German?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Brown.

"Well," rejoined the doctor, "I will be back in a few moments, and I should like to have him read you something from the magazine that I shall bring."

He brought back a German magazine in which the story was printed and from which he had made a translation, and the name signed to the story was that of one of the most celebrated professors of Germany. This man had stolen it from the first publisher, and palmed it off on the editor of the German magazine as original. Mr. Brown took our own periodical, the one the story was stolen from, and the German magazine, packed the three up together, and sent them to the editor of the German publication, and I presume when the three magazines arrived there was music.

A CHEMIST DETECTIVE

THE most widely known detective in France is Edmond Bayle, a chemist, whose laboratory is in the Palais de Justice in that city.

He is chief of the technical bureau of the Paris police department, and he has met with such success that the more uneducated criminals look upon him as a dabbler in magic, says the London *Answers*.

Dr. Bayle does not work on the British Sherlock Holmes's lines. He pays no attention to the personality or psychology of the criminal, but confines himself to material things. His work-shop is equipped in accordance with this, and the numerous pieces of apparatus are designed for special purposes, such as examining forged money, the detection of bloodstains, and, in fact, the analysis of anything and everything that is picked up by those on the trail of a criminal.

In his record are registered the names of more than eight million persons who have ever been involved in crime of any sort, and full particulars of any one of them can be produced at a moment's notice.

This extraordinary man has a theory that there is no crime that cannot be detected, and that every criminal, however clever, leaves traces behind him. Dr. Bayle has now a new method by which he can photograph fingerprints, even if the person who made them was wearing gloves at the time.

A Bit of Clay

By JOSEPH T. KESCEL

IT was what Dan Crosby saw as he stood looking into the show window, with its quiet, diffused light and its background, ceiling, and draperies of rich black velvet, that suddenly gave him the idea.

His inspiration did not come, though, from the lights or the draperies themselves, or even from the neat and handsome placard, which, suspended by a dull gold cord from the black velvet oval above, pertinently inquired, "Why live when you can have a home like this for $50?"

It was the thing beneath the placard—the black, cloth-covered burial casket resting on a pedestal of black marble—that so entirely absorbed Dan Crosby's attention.

Crosby was no longer young. Only the week before he had turned fifty, and he looked every day of his years. Back in his younger days preceding that slip in his calculations and the passing of a ten-year sentence, he had been called "Look-Ahead Dan" by both the police and many of his own kind.

But, as he had often admitted to himself, he had not looked ahead far enough on that express car job, though he never failed to give due credit for his running down and final capture to the express company's chief detective, Mr. Dickerson.

Ten years of prison life had changed Crosby's appearance considerably. His once black hair was now nearly white. His clean-shaven face looked drawn and hard. He was thinner, too, than he used to be, with somewhat of a sag to his broad shoulders.

Yet though he was not so robust as young Look-Ahead Dan had been, he was confident that there was the stuff for one more job still left in him—a job that would mean idleness and ease for himself and Milly to the end of their days. Milly, too, was getting along. She would be forty-five next birthday.

She had stood by him from that day when Detective Dickerson had gently tapped him on the shoulder until the day when she met him outside the prison gates, after he had served his sentence. Then she had said:

"Come on home, Dan. I've still got that house up in the Bronx that I bought after the cash-in on the express car job. Even Dickerson himself could never get it away from me."

For the next few months Crosby had loafed with not much thought of the morrow. Then, when Milly's funds began to run low, he had started scheming to make a raise.

Although he had thought and pondered, nothing big and plausible enough came to him until he stood looking in the undertaker's somberly trimmed show window, given added distinctive individuality by the soft light within and the darkness of night without.

For a full five minutes he stood there, staring, oblivious of the occasional curious glances cast at him. Then he joined the passing crowd and walked toward the nearest subway entrance, his mind busy with his thoughts.

An hour later he was talking confidentially to Milly as they sat, heads close together, in the living-room of the house up in the Bronx.

"This is a knockout!" he declared. "No one would ever suspect us—not even Dickerson. And it wouldn't make any difference if he did. He would have to take it out in

suspecting, because he wouldn't have a thing to drop on.

"I've thought it all out, Milly. It's a knockout. It'll be our best job—the biggest and the cleverest thing we've ever pulled off, and it'll probably mean Easy Street for us as long as we live." Then he minutely outlined his plan.

One morning, two weeks later, Crosby casually walked into the morgue and viewed, one after another, the remains of the unclaimed dead. He did not find any one whom he had ever known, but that made no difference. He was entirely satisfied with the result of his visit.

Early that same afternoon Milly, dressed in deep black and with her rather good-looking face showing signs of worry, presented herself at the morgue in quest of a missing cousin. With but little searching she found the man for whom she was looking—apparently a suicide, who had removed from his clothing all marks which might have helped to establish his identity. Milly, however, claimed that she recognized him by a triangular scar on his left temple. Crosby had told her to look for this scar.

Then, though evidently greatly agitated, she asked how she must proceed to get possession of the body, to give it proper burial. This was explained to her, and she was shortly in communication with a reputable undertaker.

The following evening the body lay in a black casket in the house up in the Bronx, with several of Crosby's friends listening to a short funeral service.

After the friends had departed Crosby gave the undertaker's assistant a hand in placing the casket and its contents in a strong pine shipping box, to be ready for removal to the railroad station early the next morning. But when they were alone Crosby and Milly carried the body down into the cellar and buried it in a deep hole already prepared for it.

Next Crosby tinkered at both shipping box and casket until sure that he had made a satisfactory job for his purpose. In his younger days he had worked as a cabinet maker. The experience gained at that time now stood him well in hand.

Shortly after nine o'clock the following morning, when the Canadian Limited pulled out of the Grand Central station, the yellowish pine shipping box rested on the floor of the express car, just as Crosby had planned.

So far Look-Ahead Dan had made no miscalculations. The undertaker, obeying Milly's tearful yet minute instructions, had arranged all details exactly as she wanted them.

Another undertaker, in Milly's little home town, in the western part of the state, had been wired to have a grave ready, to meet the body, and to make an interment the same evening. There would be no further services. The body was to be laid away decently and quietly, with Milly as the only mourner.

At no time had Crosby in public offered even so much as a suggestion. Milly had, with the aid of the undertaker, openly done everything. Ed Mantor, her cousin, under whose name the body was to be buried, had, years before, been stabbed to death by a pal and then been laid away under an assumed name in a Long Island cemetery. So there was nothing to fear from him. His parents, as well as Milly's, were dead. Consequently as Milly, heavily veiled, leaned back in her seat and gazed out of the car window as the train sped northward, she shared Crosby's feelings that easy days for them were ahead.

Five hours after leaving New York the express messenger, Frank Brand, standing at his desk on the train checking over some waybills, with his back toward the pine box, gave a startled gasp as he felt something hard suddenly press against his spine and heard the curt order:

"Don't move till I tell you, or I'll shoot."

He had not seen the pine box lid shipped as baggage open cautiously while Crosby stepped out.

Brand gave a fairly steady "All right. I understand. What do you want?"

"The stuff out of that safe," returned Dan Crosby grimly. "There ought to be something mighty good in it. Always is on the Limited."

This was so, as Brand very well knew.

And when, after opening the safe, he turned to face the masked man in a gray suit with a revolver in his hand, he knew that the thief stood a good chance of making a big haul.

"I'm much obliged to you," said Crosby quietly. "I was afraid that you might put up a fight and that I'd have to shoot you. Some of the messengers haven't got a lick of sense, but you're wise.

"Still, I ain't quite through with you. No, not quite yet. You've got to be tied up and gagged. After that I'll say good-by. Face the end of the car!"

Brand did as he was told, his gaze instantly riveting on the long pine box, its lid now swung up on hinges.

Crosby quickly tied Brand's hands behind his back, then his feet, and afterward forced a gag between his teeth.

"Now," Crosby added as the messenger lay on the car floor bound and helpless, "you'll have to take my place in that box for a little while, but don't get excited about it, because you'll be your own happy self soon after you reach the next stop."

This was a flat lie, as Crosby knew that on the gag was a deadly poison, which must already be beginning its work.

Brand was fast growing limp when Crosby lifted him into the box. He was dead by the time the lid was screwed down tightly.

A few minutes later, a filled leather bag in his hand, Crosby stood behind the express car's closed door, waiting for the train to slow down. Five miles further ahead, at a lonely spot where two railroads crossed, he knew that the train would, according to custom, come to a dead stop and then wait for the tower man's signal to proceed.

As the train started to slow down Crosby slid the car door open wide enough for him to slip out. The wheels had scarcely stopped revolving when he lowered himself to the roadbed and flattened out on the ground, as close to the ties as safety would permit. Now, anybody looking from the car windows as the train moved on, would be unable to see him.

The engineer tooted his whistle in answer to the tower man's come-ahead signal, and immediately afterward the wheels began revolving again.

When the rear car had clanked by Crosby arose and made for some woods, just off the railroad right of way, where he meant to hide until dark, and then walk to the town he had picked out from which to start his trip back to New York. No one was in sight and he felt sure that the signal man would keep his eyes on the crossing until the train was safely over.

It was past mid-afternoon when the express company's chief detective, Mr. Dickerson, sat in his New York office and talked over long-distance with one of his men, well out in the middle of the state.

"This is Connel," said the man. "I'm calling up from Galdane. Number nine pulled in here about an hour ago, with the express messenger, Frank Brand, missing."

Dickerson drew a pad of paper close to the phone.

"Yes, I hear you. Go on. Anything missing beside Brand?"

"Yes. The safe is cleaned out. It looks as if Brand must have dropped off the car with his loot some place back on the line. Probably by the side door, as the end doors were fastened on the inside by that stick arrangement some of the boys use.

"You know what I mean. A piece of two by two hard wood, with a spike in one end that stuck in the floor. The other end is slipped under the lock below the doorknob. Both doors were fastened this way when number nine pulled in here. So that does away with the possibility of anybody getting in through them."

"What have you done?" Dickerson asked, tapping his pencil on the pad.

"Nothing yet. I'm going on with the car and another messenger to Terriss at the end of this division. We'll deliver only the big stuff along the way and set off a corpse at the junction, where it goes on the branch line further upstate. Then I'll hold the car at Terriss until you get there, if you think it's worth while for you to come."

"Guess I'll run out, Connel," said Dickerson quietly. "Look for me on number

three." And at half-past four o'clock Detective Dickerson, bland and apparently unobserving, sauntered toward the train platforms to board an upstate express.

This was Dickerson all over. He never seemed to hurry. He never raised his voice or got excited. His face was round and smooth, his cheeks pink, and his eyes a mild light blue. In height he was barely five feet seven and inclined to be stout.

He was in no more of a hurry when he left the train at Terriss than he had been when he boarded it in New York. Nor did he quicken his step as he made his way toward the express car, now standing on a side track, and climbed into the presence of Connel, who greeted him with a friendly "Hello, Dave! Nice night."

Connel knew his chief. He never wanted the first word to be business.

"Hello, Matt," Dickerson returned easily. "It is a nice night. I noticed it while I was walking across the yards."

Then he stepped to a bracketed lamp, turned the light a little higher, and as he threw a questioning glance around the interior of the car inquired casually:

"Anything new?"

"No, I phoned you pretty much everything, except that I've learned since. That robbery was one of the biggest hauls ever pulled off on our company."

Dickerson nodded.

"So I've already gathered. And your express messenger, Brand, turned the trick?"

"It looks that way, and, besides, of late he's been flying pretty high."

Detective Dickerson nodded again. This was not fresh news to him. Still he made no comment, and Connel went on: "He's been stepping some, but blamed if I thought he'd jump over like this!"

For a big part of the night Dickerson and Connel worked together, checking over waybills, sending messages, and looking for clues. And while they worked Milly and Crosby, although on different trains, were speeding back toward New York and their house in the Bronx.

Milly was the first to reach home the following morning. Crosby did not turn up until after dark, and then explained his delay by saying that he had traveled on four different railroads, the better to tangle his trail.

In an upstairs room, with the shades tightly drawn, the pair examined the loot from the express safe. The haul had greatly exceeded their expectations. In those bundles of bills, jewels, and packages of bonds were ease and plenty for the remainder of their days.

"It's sure a knockout, Dan!" said Milly admiringly. "No one, not even that round-eyed Dickerson himself, can trace this job back to us. If by chance the express messenger's body should be dug up we can swear that the undertaker's men pulled off the job. We didn't have anything to do with it, and our word is as good as theirs, but I don't think there's any danger."

Look-Ahead Dan thought the same and said so. Then he secreted the valuables in a prepared cache and, like Milly, serenely awaited developments.

A week went by. It was evening, and Crosby again stood staring into the same undertaker's window from which his big idea had come. There was the black velvet back drop, with the black canopy overhead. There was the placard suspended by the golden cord, and there, too, was the black casket resting on its marble pedestal.

Then there came a gentle tap on Look-Ahead Dan's shoulder. Turning quickly, he saw what he had instinctively feared to see —the mild blue eyes and pink cheeks of Detective Dickerson, who said slowly:

"I hope you'll come along without any trouble, Dan."

Crosby knew that Dickerson somehow had it on him. He didn't know how he knew it, yet he was fairly sure of the fact. Only a few seconds later he was positive, for the officer in his blandest manner announced:

"I saw you looking in that window three or four weeks back, Dan. It struck me as rather strange at the time, though I didn't think so much of it until after I found that it was our express messenger, Frank Brand, instead of Milly's cousin, Ed Mantor, who'd been buried at Milly's old home town."

"Oh!" grunted Dan.

"Before finding out, though, by tracing back, that Milly was the consignor of that casket, I don't mind telling you that you had me guessing, Dan. Then the scent got hot pretty fast."

"Well?" growled the crook uneasily.

"First came the opening of the grave and the finding, besides Brand's body, of—something else that I'll tell you about presently. Second was the establishment of the fact that the undertaker's men—who've got an absolutely cast-iron alibi—had had nothing to do with the job.

"After this things narrowed right down to you and Milly, for the something else that we found in the casket were a few pieces of clay—not many pieces and none of them very large. Still, all combined made a fairish lump, which we turned over for analysis to a geological expert. He reported that the lump was, as we'd rather suspected, of the same kind of clay as that found around your place in the Bronx."

The crook could hardly repress a gasp of alarm.

"This report gave me the idea that something might have been buried in your cellar," the detective went on, "so about three hours ago, while you were downtown here, we—er—persuaded Milly to let us investigate. Besides finding in the cellar the body that Milly got from the morgue, we found lots of clay like that in poor Brand's coffin. You must have been careless, Dan, and neglected to clean off your shoes before you got into the casket to be shipped as a stiff!"

Dan's jaws snapped together, and a despairing light gleamed in his hollow eyes as the bracelets were locked on his wrists.

"Come along!" said the detective, and he led his prisoner away.

A DOG DETECTIVE

IN one of the farm-houses of a prosperous New England town there lived at the time of this story the farmer and his wife, their daughter, and a small but intelligent dog. One day the girl was left alone in the house, when a rough-looking tramp appeared at the door. His appearance clearly indicated that it was not food he was after; and when the girl opened the door the man sprang into the room, roughly pushing the girl aside.

A lively tussle between the strong country girl and the tramp then ensued, which was interrupted by the entrance of the dog. The little animal could not help in any other way than by barking, but he made such a noise that the intruder caught him and shut him up in a closet. Before he could renew his attack upon the girl she had aroused the neighbors by her screams, and the tramp escaped without being caught. The girl was much injured by the thief's brutility.

In the meantime no trace had been found of her assailant. When the haying season opened the farmer wanted a hired man, and engaged a stranger that came to the house and applied for work. The new man boarded with the family, and made friends with everybody except the dog, who had taken a great dislike to him ever since he entered the house. The dog would become almost frantic whenever he saw the hired man around. The dog's continued strange actions finally aroused suspicions, and the farmer suggested to his wife that perhaps the new man was the tramp who several months ago had entered the house.

Finally his hired man was arrested for some petty crime, and lodged in the county jail to await his trial. The farmer then resolved to test his suspicions; and he visited the jail, and, accompanied by his dog, entered the prison at the right of the prisoner's cell. The dog became nearly frantic with rage, and had he been larger, would have torn the man to pieces. The farmer then accused the man of robbery, and he made a full confession. He was immediately taken before a magistrate, and sentenced by the court to a long term of years in the State Prison. The faithful dog had secured his conviction.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
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99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
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101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
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103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
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106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by B. Poynter.
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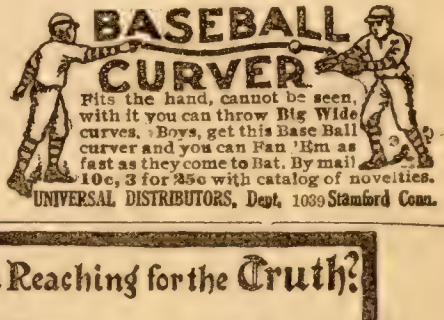

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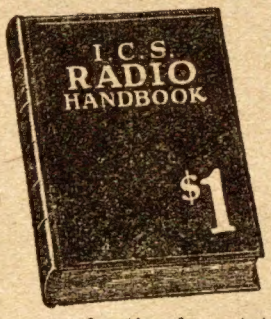

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